

# The Architect's Newspaper

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## Florida All-Stars

Local talents come together to create a world-class museum. Read on page 13.



## Where the Sun Shines

The phrase “midcentury modern” immediately calls up visions of California. But in the 1950s and early 1960s, Florida experienced a design awakening of its own. Read on page 21.



## No Rose without a Thorn

David Adjaye's pink-hued Winter Park Library & Events Center finally debuts in Florida.

After numerous delays and more than a whiff of controversy, the Adjaye Associates–designed Winter Park Library & Events Center opened last month in the Orlando-adjacent Florida city. A self-described “intergenerational community hub,” the \$41.7 million project spans three rose-pigmented concrete pavilions on a lakefront site in Winter Park’s 23-acre Martin Luther King Jr. Park.

David Adjaye, the Ghanaian British principal of Adjaye Associates, called the project “a new typology of the 21st-century knowledge campus.” It replaces Winter Park’s existing public library on East New England Avenue, completed in the late 1970s and expanded in the 1990s to replace another, older facility.

“I designed the Winter Park Library & Events Center as a collection of unique spaces and the additive ways in which their differences could overlap, coming closer to each other,” Adjaye **continued on page 6**



## Gainesville gains a new academic center

Read on page 10.



## Residential Construction

Read on page 34.





# Paranoid in Pittsburgh



Public Space System in Barcelona, MAIO

*Here it is of no avail to console yourself with the thought that you are in your own house; far rather you are in theirs.*

—Franz Kafka, “The Burrow”

*The Fabricated Landscape*, an exhibition that just closed at the Carnegie Museum of Art’s (CMA) Heinz Architectural Center in Pittsburgh, featured the work of ten contemporary architects from around the globe born in the 1970s and ’80s—most of them based in Europe and Latin America, with one representative each from the U.S. and Japan. This loose framing rendered the show’s contents a bit of a grab bag, but in addition to their youth, curator Raymond Ryan selected architects who, in their own ways, take fresh and novel approaches to practice. As he said in a statement, “They embrace a new sense of urgency regarding nature and the planned environment from how and where we live to how we engage with the world around us.” The diversity of the group and plurality of the work is the point, and Ryan’s superb selection is such that, no matter what visitors plucked from the sack, it was sure to be a goodie. Taken as a whole, the show functioned as a primer on the often-unexpected realms into which certain strata of the profession are pushing their inquiries, as well as the unconventional ways they sometimes represent their projects.

This theme of The Unexpected was introduced right away. Visitors entered the galleries from the statue-encrusted Neoclassical peristyle of the museum—one notion of what Architecture might be all about—and were confronted by a large hanging photograph of SO-IL’s 2017 *Breathe* installation in Milan: an ethereal, mesh-veiled tower residence with a roof garden capable of being disassembled and re-erected wherever, as well as outfitted for a variety of climatic conditions. The installation, of course, was not a real house but a provocation, an idea about what future living might be like, designed to, as the architects wrote, “shine a spotlight on environmental awareness, and encourage visitors to confront our tendency to take resources for granted.”

If you didn’t know that some architects are trying to show us how we could be better ecological actors, you might also be surprised to find that others are seeking to forge more positive relations with historically exploited peoples. Take German architect Anna Heringer, whose work explores architecture as “a medium to strengthen cultural and individual confidence, to support local

economies, and to foster the ecological balance.” Her Poret Kindergarten project, located in a remote region of Zimbabwe, is composed of light timber frameworks encased in mud, designed to teach local craftspeople skills that will pay dividends to the community beyond the scope of the project. She has also facilitated textile craft among Dipdii and Rohingya women in Bangladesh, helping them to generate income as well as raise awareness of their fraught political situation—a project that certainly falls outside the scope of typical architectural production.

Another revelation might be the provocative domestic and social innovation in the offerings on view from Catalan office MAIO. Their Public Space System (pictured), completed in 2014 as an improvement of a small plaza in Barcelona, is a simple 10-foot grid of posts, topped with lights and shading devices and underlaid with benches. But as the drawing above clearly shows, the possibilities of the project are open and endless, providing a flexible, informal framework within which people can choose to arrange themselves however they see fit. Open-endedness is also at the heart of MAIO’s speculative *Discontinuous Villa*, a series of small rooms entombed within sky-high pink extrusions that are dispersed in open space—a blurring of urban and residential, work and home, inside and outside, that is becoming quite familiar in our pandemic-stricken world.

There are, of course, many more eye-openers in the exhibition, and though its run is over at CMA, *The Fabricated Landscape* lives on in a three-part publication out on Inventory Press. It includes all the projects from the exhibit along with bonus texts, including a series of fables by Emilio Ambasz and an unfinished short story by Franz Kafka—“Der Bau” (“The Burrow” in English)—that was given to Belgian practice OFFICE KGDVS by clients as inspiration for the design of their villa on a secluded property outside Brussels. The project, *Villa (Der Bau)*, is a masterful essay on combining enclosed (protected) and open (vulnerable) spaces. The story, however, is an extremely weird prompt, centering as it does on the confessions of an unspecified burrowing being who is utterly paranoid about whether their dwelling is secure from relentless predators. On the other hand, considering the challenges currently facing architecture on this planet, maybe a little motivational paranoia is just what we need.

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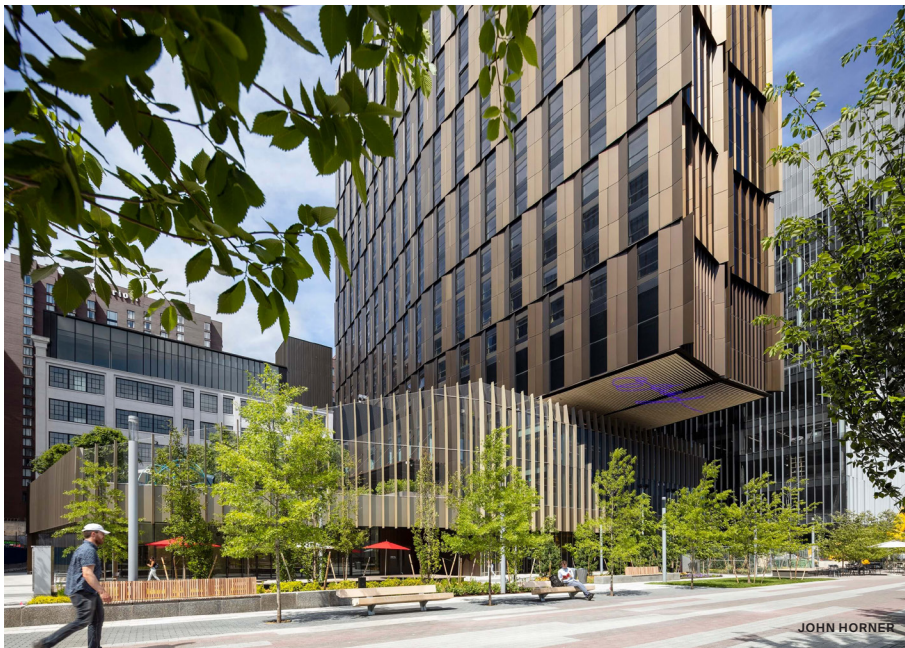


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## East



In early January, the oldest chapter of the American Institute of Architects, AIA New York (AIANY), announced the winners of the 2022 slate of awards. The 25 winning projects were awarded to AIA members and architects practicing in New York City, resulting in some potential confusion: more than a third of the honored buildings are located outside the five boroughs. In her first State of the State address, New York governor Kathy Hochul threw her support behind a legislative proposal that would mandate zero emissions for all new buildings by 2027. Hochul also announced plans

for one million electrified homes and an additional one million electrification-ready homes by 2030. If approved by the state legislature, the measure would mark the first statewide ban on gas hookups for new buildings in the nation. As if that weren't enough, the governor also endorsed the idea for a new rapid transit route extending from Jackson Heights, Queens, to Bay Ridge, Brooklyn—a land area with some 900,000 residents. If built, the proposed rail line will connect with 17 separate subway lines and the Long Island Rail Road.

## Midwest



Chicago preservationists rang in the new year riding high on a monumental win. In late December 2021, the State of Illinois announced the sale of the James Thompson Center, a postmodern icon designed by the late architect Helmut Jahn under constant threat of demolition, to developer Prime Group for \$70 million. Under the terms of the sale, Prime Group will renovate the 17-story governmental office building according to plans drawn up by Jahn's firm. In other renovation-related news, Chicago mayor Lori Lightfoot unveiled the next phase of her signature \$750 million initiative focused on

revitalizing ten historically disadvantaged neighborhoods on the city's South and West Sides through new, community-centered development. Dubbed INVEST South/West, this next phase will involve rehabilitating the historic Pioneer Bank & Trust building in Chicago's Humboldt Park and converting it to housing. In southern Indiana, a new pocket park and mural by the multidisciplinary design studio LAA Office made a splash in the small town of Salem. And Columbus, Ohio, welcomed 2022 with ambitious plans to slash greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2035.

## Southeast



Just ahead of the new year, Virginia governor Ralph Northam and Richmond mayor Levar Stoney revealed that a tentative agreement had been struck to transfer ownership of five Confederate monuments, including an equestrian statue of Robert E. Lee that was removed from its massive marble plinth in September 2021, to the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia in the state capital. (Prior to their removal, the statues were strewn on Richmond's historic Monument Avenue.) Before any further actions can be taken, the agreement must be approved

by the city council. In Atlanta, an economic development organization representing the Beltline elevated park launched a new tool that enables users to track “investments” across five impact areas: housing, parks and trails, transit and streetscapes, and economic concerns. By harnessing the mapping tool—or as a local outlet called it, the “gentrification-o-meter”—residents and stakeholders in neighborhoods located within the Beltline's 22-mile loop can more easily understand the changes underway in their own respective backyards.

## Southwest



Houston finished 2021 with a strong showing of new project announcements and completions, or near completions: The United States' first Ismaili Center unveiled designs by the London-based office Farshid Moussavi Architecture with local firm DLR. The building and its sumptuous gardens, to be designed by landscape firm Nelson Byrd Woltz, will rise on a site adjacent to Buffalo Bayou. The city's Orange Show for Visionary Art trumpeted a major expansion designed by Rogers Partners, as well as the restoration of its namesake—an idiosyncratic monument to the virtues of the orange erected singlehandedly by retired postal worker Jefferson Davis McKis-

sack. Rice University hit the news cycle as well, releasing renderings for Sarofim Hall, an art center designed by Diller, Scofidio + Renfro. The barnlike design is nominally an homage to the university's now-demolished Art Barn, but also might be a sign that the usually formally adventurous firm toned down its pitch to the institution after losing out on a previous gig, to design the campus's new opera house. Finally, the OMA-designed PostHTX, which transforms a sprawling midcentury USPS mail-sorting warehouse near downtown into a “mutable collection of programs,” opened the doors to its first phase, despite only having reached “substantial completion.”



West



The University of California, Berkeley’s College of Environmental Design appointed Lisa Iwamoto, a founding partner of San Francisco-based practice IwamotoScott, as its new architecture chair. Iwamoto replaces Renee Y. Chow, who was elevated to dean after Vishaan Chakrabarti stepped down from the post in late September. Nabr, a tech-driven real estate startup cofounded by Bjarke Ingles, announced its first apartment building project in San Jose, promising “quality, sustainability, and attainability.” Further south, the Los Angeles City Council adopted the ambitious Plan to House LA, a blueprint for adding half a million new

housing units to the city by 2029, 200,000 of which are slated to be affordable. The plan includes targeted rezoning along with “anti-displacement strategies” to safeguard against gentrification. To the east, Redlands, California, is making a move to shake off its auto-centric reputation with a new “car-light” development called University Village. Situated adjacent to Redlands University, and planned by Moore Ruble Yudell Architects & Planners, the development will bring a mix of housing, retail, and flexible workspaces centered around a Metro Link/Arrow Line rail station.

Eavesdrop

On Firmer Ground

Fourteen years, countless slips and falls, multiple lawsuits, and one hefty fine for “negligence” after it first opened to the public in 2008, the Santiago Calatrava-designed, glass-topped Ponte delle Costituzione (Constitution Bridge) spanning Venice’s Grand Canal could get a major overhaul to render it less precarious.

For years, city officials have instituted several measures at the notoriously slippery footbridge to prevent embarrassing and sometimes litigation-sparking tumbles, such as installing resin pads and nonslip stickers and even laying down a strip of trachyte stone across the middle of the 300-foot-long glass-and-steel structure. Still, nothing has stuck and now Venice has plans to replace the entire glass section of Constitution Bridge—known locally as the Calatrava Bridge—with stone.

As recently reported by *The New York Times*, the city has dedicated roughly \$565,000 to the replacement scheme, which Calatrava has come out in full support of per a statement provided by his office that *AN* publishes in full below.

Ponte della Costituzione has been highly praised by the city of Venice and its users since opening in 2008, becoming one of the most beautiful bridges in the world. The original glass paving installed on the bridge consisted of an anti-slippery upper surface that complied with all local regulations and was tested and considered suitable by all control departments of the administration. In the daily use of the bridge, the inadequate use of

certain heavy elements or even acts of vandalism have led to the breaking of some glass panes of the original flooring, which unfortunately were later replaced with inadequate glass. In the current situation, our office supports the Municipality’s substitution of glass panes for trachyte stone paving slabs, consistent with the bridge design and the surrounding cityscape to maintain its beauty and functionality.

A firm time line has yet to be established for the project as structural tests must be carried out and the plan must also win approval from Venice’s architectural authority.

Boasting postcard-perfect views along the western end of the Grand Canal, the bridge serves as a major gateway for Venice as it links Piazzale Roma, home to the city’s main bus hub, with the Santa Lucia railway station. Consequently, the structure is highly trafficked by distracted, luggage-lugging tourists, who likely contribute to the high number of falls.

Accessibility issues have also long been a concern. In 2013, a costly lift system featuring an egg-shaped cabin was installed at the bridge following complaints. It was dismantled in 2019 to the tune of roughly \$44,000 for safety reasons, including frequent overheating in the summer months. Calatrava played no part in the design or construction of the failed lift system. His firm told *AN* in 2019 that a stairlift designed by Calatrava was part of the original bridge scheme, but the city council rejected it, deciding that wheelchair users and those with limited mobility could take a water taxi across the canal instead. **Matt Hickman**

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# No Rose without a Thorn

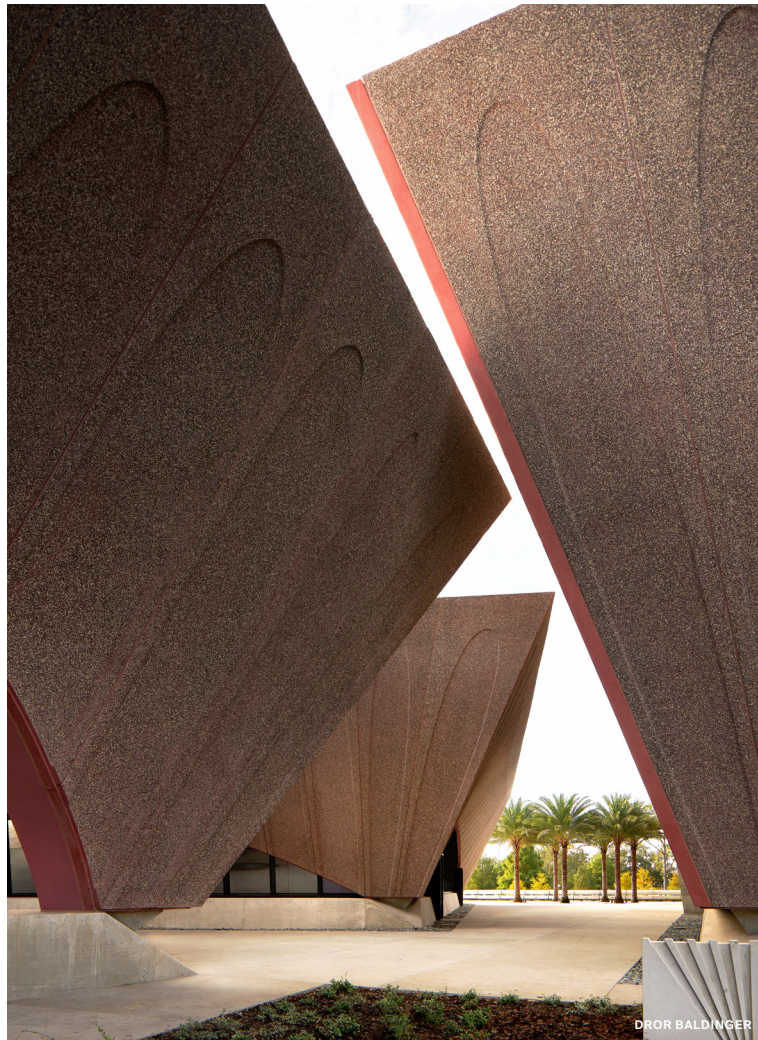
David Adjaye's pink-hued Winter Park Library & Events Center finally debuts in Florida.



DROR BALDINGER



DROR BALDINGER



DROR BALDINGER

**Top left:** The Winter Park Library & Events is situated in Martin Luther King Jr. Park and overlooks Lake Mendsen.

**Left:** A sculptural stair leads down into an auditorium inside the 18,200-square-foot events center.

Above: The lakeside civic and cultural campus, which consists of three reddish pavilions, is laced with public green space.

**continued from cover** told *AN*. “I wanted the design to catalyze and imbricate the program, ensuring a greater amount of absorption, learning, and experience in each of the conditions.”

Joining design architect Adjaye Associates for the project was the Orlando-based architect of record HuntonBrady Architects. Civil engineer and landscape firm LandDesign, envelope consultant Thornton Tomasetti, acoustic designer Gary Siebein, and MEP engineer TLC Engineering rounded out the design team.

The library and events center, with their unifying portico and plentiful green space, form a coherent architectural vision. The 35,000-square-foot Winter Park Library, housed in the largest pavilion, is considerably more spacious than its predecessor and increases the youth collection by 30 percent while doubling the amount of available public meeting space. The open-plan

library, which is serviced by automated materials robots, also features an indoor auditorium, dedicated makerspaces, a recording studio, private reading rooms, and an entrepreneurship hub complete with technology portals, a business center, and continuing education spaces.

The adjacent 18,200-square-foot events center boasts a penthouse and rooftop terrace that is as ideal for open-air fetes of up to 150 people. Below, a grand ballroom has space for up to 250 table-seated guests (or 320 if seated theater style). Outside, a lakeside amphitheater offers a spectacular venue for performances.

As the smallest of the three pavilions, the 2,500-square-foot porte cochere acts as a campus connector, completing the ensemble.

The entire project employs extensive sustainability strategies, including an advanced stormwater management system,

on-site solar energy production (expected to generate 37,865 kWh annually), and the use of locally and regionally sourced materials. Among those are ones for precast facade materials, which came from within 25 miles of the site. The structures themselves, with their generous shade-providing overhangs and insulating precast concrete walls, integrate a number of passive design strategies.

“The campus’s configuration is inspired by the flora and fauna of Winter Park’s tropical climate and this notion of tree top foliage,” Adjaye explained. “The proximity between the buildings protects the glass from glare, cultivates moments of shade, and reduces the temperature naturally by using the mass of each structure to shield solar gain.”

The project’s path to realization was less than sure. Funding-related squabbles have been particularly fierce within the small, park-laden Orange County city of roughly

30,500, located just northeast of Orlando. Residents unsuccessfully sued the city in an attempt to block the contentious project, which voters approved in 2016, and in May of last year city commissioners considered halting construction work over budget and environmental concerns.

“After seven years of meticulous planning, budgeting, imagining, creating, designing and building, we are thrilled to celebrate the grand opening with our residents, partners and guests,” said Randy Knight, Winter Park city manager, in a statement. “We have been honored to work alongside a team of world-class professionals as we built this magnificent facility for the community to come together as they continue to learn, celebrate, gather and grow.”

**Matt Hickman**



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## Cut It Out

Fort Lauderdale's new tallest tower will let the sky in.



The mixed-use 300 West Broward Boulevard development is hollow at its center.

ODA has unveiled a tower design for Fort Lauderdale, Florida's new tallest tower, and it's quite a departure from the blocky buildings the New York-based firm has become known for.

The mixed-use development known as 300 West Broward Boulevard is being positioned as a new gateway to the city's downtown and slew of surrounding museums and parks. ODA took its brief quite literally. The design consists of a pair of towers rising from a ten-story base. The larger of the two stalks is 558 feet—set to be the tallest in Fort Lauderdale—and appears to sprout an appendage, which rests on the smaller tower. A gaping void lies in the center.

The hinged massing results in an L shape in plan. The expansive podium will be stuffed with amenities, including a library, a lounge, a fitness center, and slightly more than a thousand parking spaces. The abundance continues on the roof, where landscaping, cabanas, a yoga deck, and sunrise and sunset pools (at the east and west ends, respectively) add to the idyllic atmosphere.

ODA has made sure the tower won't present an overbearing presence to pedestrians. The southwest corner of the podium will lift to reveal additional programming. A public plaza with plenty of seating will complement some 24,000 square feet of retail.

The residential portion of the 1.8-million-square-foot, 37-story project begins on the 11th floor and continues to the top, with 956

residential units planned, 18 of them on the tower's crowning two floors, designated as penthouses. Floor-to-ceiling windows are planned across the entire building, but in typical Florida style, ODA has ringed each story with balconies to both lend texture to the facade and allow residents sweeping views of the surrounding city.

Although the uppermost 11 floors of the complex are joined by a dramatic bridge, the two towers start at ground level as two distinct volumes—one on the northwestern corner of West Broward Boulevard and the other on the southeast corner of Nugent Avenue—with the latter gradually tilting to meet the connector. According to the architects, the massive void in between was intended to break down the buildings' heft. It's a twist on ODA's New York work, which relies on subtraction to achieve the same effect.

Aside from ODA, which is serving as the design architect, Stantec is the architect of record, with the Hollywood, Florida-based Witkin Hults + Partners as the landscape architect of record. 300 West Broward is being developed jointly by Aimco and Kushner Companies. The team submitted plans for approval to the Fort Lauderdale Development Review Committee on December 14. As yet, no estimated construction or potential opening dates have been provided. **Jonathan Hilburg**

## The Price of Protection

New York begins demolition of East River Park for new concrete storm barriers.



Flooding in East River Park after Hurricane Irene in 2011

The wrecking ball is coming for a portion of East River Park, a green space that has served Manhattan's Lower East Side for eight decades. Constructed during Robert Moses's tenure as New York City parks commissioner, the park sits on waterfront land that government officials deem critical for ongoing resilience projects in the area.

The Lower East Side suffered significant flooding when Hurricane Sandy slammed into the city nearly a decade ago. Storm surges returned Manhattan's coastline to its original form, effectively negating decades of land reclamation and expansion. In the aftermath, federal and local government agencies launched the Rebuild by Design competition to task architects, planners, and engineers with developing systems that could protect New York's low-lying coastal areas.

BIG and ONE Architecture's Big U was the most publicized of the winning designs and proposed a comprehensive system of walls, berms, and landscaped knolls tracing the edge of Manhattan from the East Side to the West. Later, the Department of Design and Construction significantly reduced the plan's scope and rebranded the particular portion affecting the Lower East Side as the East Side Coastal Resiliency project.

For years, the plan continued to be refined. Community outreach and town hall meetings contributed input on the scheme, which centered on a sloped, grassy berm on the western edge of East River Park abutting FDR Drive. Requiring an investment of around \$760 million, the reinforced hill would protect the neighborhoods on the other side of the elevated highway from floodwaters. East River Park itself would be allowed to flood during major storm events—a strategy that reflects natural wetland landscapes and engineering techniques pioneered by the Netherlands.

But city agencies feared that the project's construction would interfere with the flow of traffic on the FDR Drive and subterranean electrical wires operated by Con Edison. They therefore abandoned the grassy berm idea, and the administration of for-

mer mayor Bill de Blasio pursued a scheme that would have cost twice as much. Ultimately, the city resolved to demolish all of East River Park in order to make space for an additional 8 to 10 vertical feet of landfill along a 1.2-mile-long flood wall.

Rather than allow floodwaters to inundate parts of the park periodically, the city would essentially erect a levee to keep waters out permanently, or at least until 2050, when rising seas will have rendered its efficacy moot. A new park, similar in layout to East River Park, is slated for construction on top of the infill.

In April 2021, just as the city prepared to execute the plan, disgruntled residents and park users organized protests and took legal action against the municipal government. In November, the Appellate Division, First Department issued a restraining order to halt the demolition, but the city went ahead and began cutting down 380 of the park's 991 mature trees. Officials argued that the order did not require a pause; workers continued to clear the canopy of trees under the protection of a small army of police officers. On December 16, another court overturned the restraining order, leaving activists with few options.

Specific concerns vary from resident to resident, but complaints tend to center on a construction process that will leave the neighborhood without a major green space for several years until the new park is built. Many residents have also spoken out against the destruction of habitats for local wildlife and the air pollution that will probably accompany the heavy machinery needed to build the levee. And while 1,800 trees are planned for the new park, none will be as large in the foreseeable future as the mature trees that had been there.

To disheartened locals, the East Side Coastal Resiliency project is just another top-down endeavor, one that reflects little care for the expressed opinions and needs of the people who use the park most. Only the coming years will reveal whether the park's shiny replacement brings solace to those same community members. **Aaron Smithson**





The Heights Foundation Early Learning Center, Fort Myers FL | architect: RG Architects | photographer: Amber Frederiksen

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## Gainesville Gains

**Bohlin Cywinski Jackson and Walker Architects' Malachowsky Hall deflects the Florida glare with an aluminum facade and electrochromatic glazing.**

**Design architect:** Bohlin Cywinski Jackson  
**Associate architect:** Walker Architects  
**Structural engineer:** Walter P Moore  
**Glazing manufacturer:** Viracon (curtain wall) and SageGlass (electrochromatic window glazing)  
**Prefabricated panel manufacturer:** N-RG Cladding  
**Panel finish manufacturer:** PPG

In early August 2021, before the University of Florida in Gainesville commenced fall classes, a construction crew erected provisional elements of a forthcoming campus landmark. Ten full-size modules, lonely in the afternoon sun, served as poignant stand-ins for the Malachowsky Hall for Data Science and Information Technology, before being disassembled.

Designed by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson and Walker Architects, Malachowsky Hall will feature a textured facade that protrudes and folds to create swatches of light and shadow all along its considerable length. The origamiliike creases provide for some very idiosyncratic window shapes, which should quickly endear the building to the university community once it opens in the summer of 2023.

The purpose of the exercise was to ascertain how the prefabricated facade panels from N-RG Cladding would perform on-site, in sunny, humid north Florida. "We desired a seamless panel and N-RG suggested making the panel completely out of aluminum plate to ensure that we would achieve the desired finish and also meet the dimensional tolerances without additional joints, due to material size limitations with other cladding options," noted the design team. Once the mock-up was approved, N-RG prepared a full set of shop drawings, which Bohlin Cywinski Jackson reviewed prior to fabrication of the panels.

The foundation of the seven-story, 263,000-square-foot facility was laid back in December 2020 and comprises over 400 auger-cast piles driven 50 feet deep into the

sandy soil. Above grade, the design team, in collaboration with structural engineer Walter P Moore, opted for a relatively straightforward cast-in-place flat slab concrete structural system, which suited Malachowsky Hall's rectangular massing just fine. (The design's boxy character is offset by cantilevers and an expansive roofline canopy to punctuate different aspects of the program, which spans 30 laboratories and a series of social spaces.)

Bohlin Cywinski Jackson began working with general contractor Ajax Building Company and N-RG well in advance of construction. After the design concept for the building envelope was set in place, the three parties, alongside the structural engineer, considered aspects of detailing, thermal performance, and waterproofing. They also mapped out how the numerous panels—1,500 in total—would come together and how the Sage Glass-produced electrochromatic glazing would sit within them. The team ultimately concluded that all these factors needed to be vetted on-site.

The panels, which will hang off the slab edge via a slotted embed-and-clip system, are actually double-sided. There is a structural backup layer measuring 30 feet tall and 12 feet wide, incorporating composed sheathing, a weather barrier, and insulation; and painted 1/8th-inch-thick aluminum cladding 6 feet wide and 7.5 feet tall.

"The system allows us to meet energy requirements—Malachowsky Hall is designed to meet LEED Gold—and design-build will facilitate a more rapid close-in of the building to meet schedule requirements," the design team added.

While the project called for well-tuned solar mitigation in the form of a large opaque facade for the laboratories, the larger communal areas are framed by stretches of Viracon-fabricated, ceramic-fritted curtain wall. **Matthew Marani**



COURTESY BOHLIN CYWINSKI JACKSON

**Above:** A mock-up of the design's faceted aluminum facade

**Left:** The rectilinear massing is punctuated by cantilevered glass volumes, indicating social or collaborative spaces.

**Following page, top:** Malachowsky Hall will act as a hub at the University of Florida's Gainesville campus.

**Following page, bottom:** The building is currently slated for completion in summer 2023.



COURTESY BOHLIN CYWINSKI JACKSON



# 11 In Construction







# Decoration, Dramaturgy, & the Slow Arts

In this month's anthology, critics review a museum, the renovation of a legendary theater, and a foundation for art exhibitions and residencies: Alfonso Architects' Museum of the American Arts and Crafts Movement in St. Petersburg, Florida; Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre, as reinterpreted by Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill; and SO-IL's Amant Art Campus in East Brooklyn.





SEAMUS PAYNE



SEAMUS PAYNE



SEAMUS PAYNE

**Facing page:** An egglike volume clad in white metal panels protrudes from the museum's south facade.

**Above:** A large canopy punctuates a smaller volume containing a restaurant and events venue.

**Far left:** Hollow conical forms designate special displays.

**Left:** The museum possesses 40,000 square feet of galleries.

# Florida All-Stars

Local talents come together to create a world-class museum.

## Museum of the American Arts and Crafts Movement

**Architects:** Alfonso Architects  
**Location:** St. Petersburg, Florida

**Construction manager:** Gilbane Building Company  
**Structural engineer:** Walter P Moore  
**MEP and fire protection:** VoltAir Consulting Engineers  
**Lighting design:** DKT Lighting and Design

On the Florida peninsula's central west coast, just across the bay from Tampa, is the city of St. Petersburg, a recurring *New York Times* pick for best places to visit in the world. Indeed, "St. Pete," as it's called by locals, has a lot going for it. As the state's greenest urban center, St. Pete is on track to reach 100 percent renewable energy by 2035. It also boasts a well-established arts community, which has spurred the city's cultural patrons to invest heavily in pilgrimage-worthy works of architecture. The latest, the Museum of the American Arts and Crafts Movement (MAACM), is arguably the crown jewel of the bunch.

Situated on a 3.2-acre site where downtown meets the Waterfront Arts District, MAACM is the third privately funded cultural institution in St. Pete and houses a renowned collection of American Arts and Crafts objects owned by the Two Red Roses Foundation. Designed by local, Ybor City-based office Alfonso Architects, and brought to life by construction management firm Gilbane, the

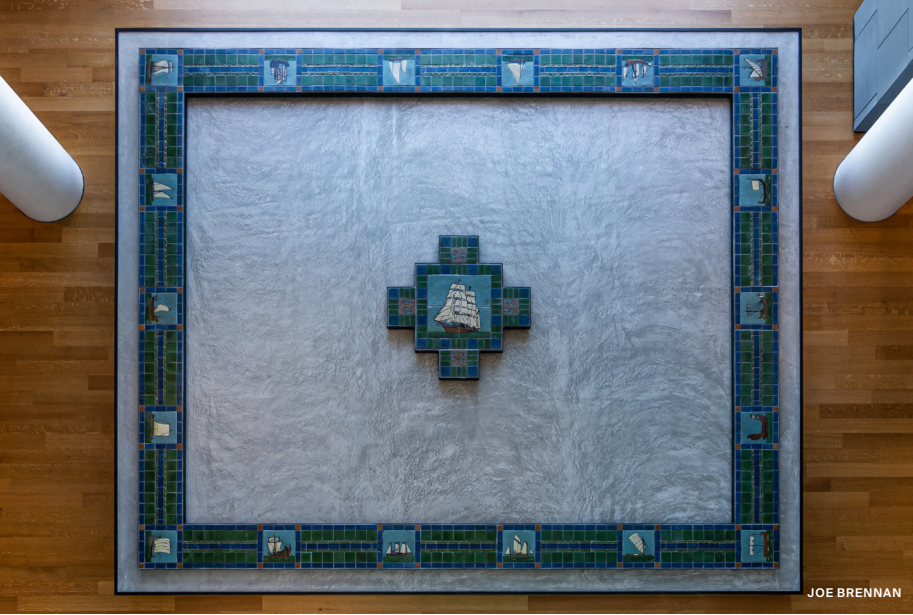
137,000-square-foot, \$90 million project offers an architecture both sensuous and rational, playful in its suspended white metal shingle-clad geometries and elegant in its proportions and layered, handcrafted materials. The precisely executed detailing never deviates from the overarching design logic; simply put, its consistency and quality are world-class.

The hundreds of small and large works on display feel right at home in this gracious and considered context, which is positively spartan compared with the flowery interiors that exemplified the Arts and Crafts movement. Here, each ornate museum piece—be it pottery, block prints, or painted glass—is afforded the opportunity to shine and be marveled at. The greatest challenge for fellow museum nerds, and particularly for museum nerds who happen to be architects, is pacing oneself as one moves through the 40,000 square feet of galleries. A visit is both exhilarating and mentally exhausting, impossible to complete in a single day.

Mottled black venetian plaster marks out critical thresholds throughout the interior, offering a counterpoint to the gleaming white shell—also plaster, but looking for all the world like Calacatta marble—of a sculptural stairway that connects the galleries starting on the second floor. A long stretch of the opening gallery is glazed, allowing visitors to orient themselves prior to immersion in the collection. Elsewhere, small openings punctuate the otherwise-opaque exterior envelope. South-facing windows offer views of an ever-increasing number of residential towers, while those on the opposite end of the building frame a bustling low rise commercial corridor and the Crescent Lake water tower, a local landmark since 1924. On the top floor, afternoon sun falling through a clerestory casts a mesmerizing bar of light across the exhibition space.

But one's itinerary could just as easily begin and end in the soaring full-height atrium, which contains the museum store and a cafe, in addition to administrative offices. From





here, it’s possible to admire the spectacular stairway from all angles, including below; its tightly coiled form is a subtle homage to Charles Rennie Mackintosh’s Glasgow Rose motif (titular inspiration for the Two Red Roses Foundation?). The east face of the atrium is clad in walnut acoustic panels, which have clearly been laid with great care. Along the base of the wall is anchored one of the museum’s many gems: an intricate 600-piece mosaic that portrays a calm maritime scene dating to 1914.

Like these architectonic elements, the coffered skylight underscores the architects’ commitment to evoking the ethos, if not the style, of the Arts and Crafts movement. To create the installation, they stacked and offset metal louvers in a manner recalling patterns found in Frank Lloyd Wright’s stained-glass works, examples of which are in MAACM’s collection. (The skylight transept brilliantly conceals a maintenance catwalk.) An expanding and contracting overlay of light and shadow

enlivens the atrium’s rich finishes over the course of the day. Museum patrons and the general public are welcome to watch or to dine in the cafe and linger in the comfort of Tulip tables and chairs. Or they might browse the thoughtfully designed and curated gift shop, where daylight is modulated by an exterior cast-in-place concrete brise-soleil.

The scale of the museum both anticipates changes in the urban fabric and responds to the scale of the city’s past, taking confident cues from the historic former Pennsylvania Hotel across the street and the nearby Coliseum Ballroom and Palladium Theater. Given MAACM’s four-sided site, as is typical in car-centric Florida, the design team elected to break up the program into dedicated volumes. The five-story museum block anchors the western edge, while a more diminutive block containing an upscale restaurant and event space acts as a bridge to the parking structure. With its Brazilian granite rainscreen, the museum appears weightier than the mostly



**Top left:** A towering sculpted stair dominates the full-height atrium.

**Top right:** The inner side of the stair is paneled in rich walnut. The quarter-sawn white oak steps glow with light.

**Left:** MAACM displays hundreds of mosaics, furniture, stained glass, and other objects, which represents a mere sampling of its total collection.

glazed restaurant annex, which compensates with a dramatic roof canopy that pins the garage behind it.

Before MAACM opened in September 2021, much of the local media coverage dwelled on the extensive project delays, partly due to COVID-19. A positive spin would foreground the patience and vision that has produced an architectural reminder to not rush something intended to last forever. It’s also a reminder of what an extraordinary client–design team–contractor collaboration can yield and, still more, how regional expertise often exceeds the products of many an anointed starchitect. Just as our universe is packed with constellations, some celebrated for millennia and many more unknown, world-class practitioners in every region are waiting to be seen. We must do better to acknowledge extraordinary practitioners—not as “second-tier starchitects,” as a 2010 article referred to Brad Cloepfil and Allied Works, but as the stars they are when we first catch sight of them. Alfonso

Architects’ MAACM makes a most compelling case that our stars are bright in Florida.

**Judi Shade Monk is a registered architect and an instructional assistant professor at the University of Florida School of Architecture.**



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# It’s Magic

Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture’s expansion of the Steppenwolf Theatre brings the backstage to the house.

## Steppenwolf Theatre

**Design architect:** Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture  
**Location:** Chicago

**Landscape architect:** Oslund and Associates  
**Structural engineering:** Thornton Tomasetti  
**Electrical engineering:** Environmental Systems Design  
**Civil engineering:** Spaceco  
**Lighting design:** Morlights  
**Theater consultant:** Charcoalblue

Spending closing night of my high school’s production of *A Christmas Carol* in the company of theater geeks—but not being one myself—I watched enviously as my peers galloped and hollered at the cast party from backstage. They navigated around strange machineries, like spotlights and scaffolds and a forest of ropes dangling from ethereal catwalks, disappearing behind doors to reemerge

on stage; they knew where all the trapdoors were. Theaters, I learned from this close vantage, are places for architectural magic. What I experienced as a 16-year-old taught me that the back-of-house isn’t only a means to magic but is itself a space of fantasy; what happens architecturally in public must be met with excellence behind the scenes.

Magic, and high school drama, were on my mind as I toured Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture’s (ASGG) new addition to the Steppenwolf Theatre campus in Chicago, where it seems that the firm has adopted the role of magician as well as architect.

Though Steppenwolf started out as a scrappy theater company in 1974, it has grown in prestige and audience reach. Its physical space has also expanded through acquiring neighboring properties to the north and, later, to the south. The first phase of the expansion project, completed in 2016, also by ASGG, added a public cafe and community-accessible black-box theater space on the north end of the ground floor. The second phase,

completed this past fall, bookends the original theater’s south end, adding a plethora of public-facing amenities like a two-story atrium and two bars. The atrium is conventionally pleasing, using materials like polished concrete and glass to create a sophisticated-yet-industrial feel. Perhaps it felt dull to me because it was empty, but who these days—two years into a pandemic—can imagine a theater atrium aglow and filled with a buzzing crowd?

The lackluster atrium stands in contrast to the new, flexible theater-in-the-round that is positioned as the beating heart of ASGG’s addition. Clad in textured gray glass fiber reinforced concrete panels, and ringed by the atrium, the mass of the Ensemble Theater resembles a geometric asteroid in a museum display. Its massive girth and towering height—the volume extends past the atrium roofline—create an identifiable, if ambiguous, cap atop the new addition, providing some visual interest from the nearby El train.

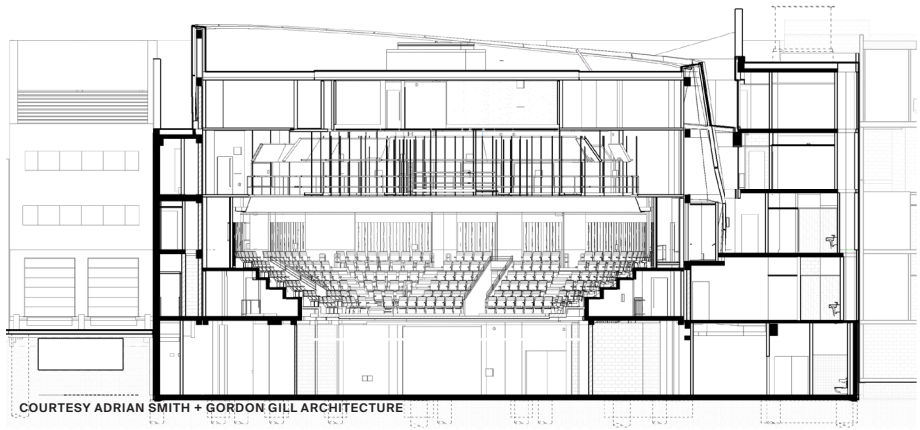
Inside, the architects have created a highly flexible venue, with 500 seats set around an

ovular stage that to me felt surprisingly small in comparison with the exterior’s gargantuan geometry. Seating rows or sections can be removed or added, I learned, allowing the stage to grow from 900 square feet to 2,500 and audience capacity from 250 to 500; the vom can be moved, widened, or eliminated entirely. The stage itself comprises individual square platform panels that can be removed or lowered, and with the generous 15-foot trap room beneath, sets can “grow” from the theater substrate. Suspended 33 feet over the stage, the grid, with its movable componentry, can enable “one million lighting positions,” according to Steppenwolf executive director Brooke Flanagan. Thanks to this fly system, performances can move vertically rather than simply horizontally and set designers can flex their creative muscles. The promise is one of exhilarating and intimate experiences for audiences; all seats are within 20 feet of the stage. Exiting the Ensemble Theater from the second floor leads audiences to an intermission bar, the last public space in the new addition. New

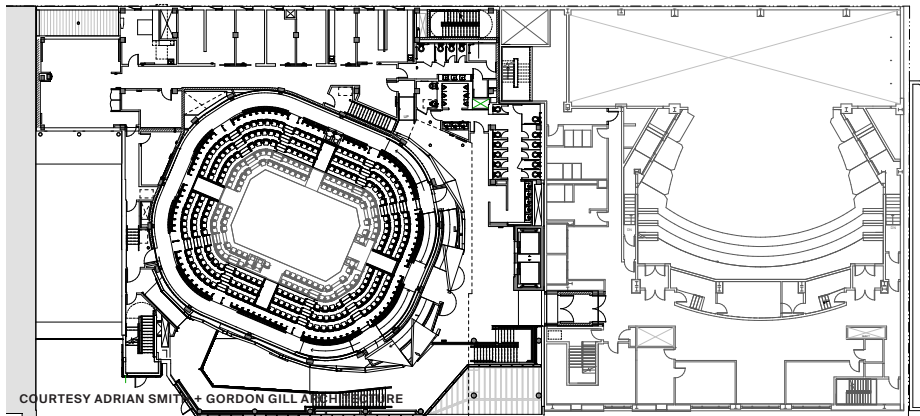




JAMES STEINKAMP PHOTOGRAPHY



COURTESY ADRIAN SMITH + GORDON GILL ARCHITECTURE



COURTESY ADRIAN SMITH + GORDON GILL ARCHITECTURE



JAMES STEINKAMP PHOTOGRAPHY

back-of-house spaces include six dressing rooms and a greenroom, while the third floor houses the company's script library and costume shop. Most impressive of all is the top floor, the fourth, which is dedicated to youth programming and theater education. A bright, naturally lit corridor that wraps around the Ensemble Theater's pointed roof connects three teen spaces—the Lab, the Maker Studio, and the Reflection Gallery, each one outfitted with colorful acoustic paneling and springboard floors—leading to a small patio with views to Halsted Street. It is a startling amount of space—prime real estate at that—to devote to young people who are learning about theater. These classrooms won't accommodate large groups of donors at a fundraiser; the rooftop patio can fit ten comfortably. These are places for youth, and for nobody else, and that's where we return to magic.

As so many theater critics have said, the magic of the theater happens when the story—the script, performances, makeup, and costumes, all revolving around a backdrop of sets

and props—transports an audience to other places. But when you're an architecture critic, the fantasticism of theater reveals itself in the structures that support all its other elements, onstage and off. The Ensemble Theater's otherworldly exterior is a sleight of hand on the part of the architects—we're looking at the left hand while the right, well, the right hand is 30 feet above you in the catwalk. The new addition to the Steppenwolf Theatre is a testament to back-of-house enchantment: the secrets in the stage trap or above the light rigs that allow sets to soar; the urban aerie where youth can experiment, play, and collaborate among themselves without having to share space with wine-guzzling donors. What happens in secret is key to magic making, and magicians never reveals their tricks.

*The Steppenwolf Theatre's Ensemble Theater will stage its first show, Seagull, on April 28.*

**Anjolie Rao is a Chicago-based journalist covering the built environment.**

**Facing page:** The newly expanded Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago presents a compelling frontage along Halsted Street.

**Top left:** The seats of the Ensemble Theater can be easily reconfigured according to the needs of performances.

**Above:** The Ensemble Theatre's faceted, asteroidlike massing is ringed by the atrium and the fourth floor spaces dedicated to youth programming.

**Middle:** A north-south section reveals the extensive fly system and the theater substratum.

**Bottom:** The ground-floor plan of the Steppenwolf Theatre, the Ensemble Theatre (left) and the original 1974 performance hall (right) side-by-side programming.





RAFAEL GAMO

# Cocoon Time

The Amant Foundation runs out the clock.

## The Amant Foundation

**Architect:** SO-IL  
**Location:** Brooklyn, New York

**Architect of record:** Andrew Reyniak  
**General contractor:** Paratus Group  
**Structural engineer:** Silman Associates  
**MEP engineer:** CES Engineering, Plus Group Engineering  
**Civil engineer:** Bohler Engineering, Plus Group Consulting Engineering  
**MEP engineer:** EEA Consulting Engineers  
**Lighting designer:** TILLET Lighting Design Associates  
**Structural waterproofing:** Simpson Gumpertz & Heger  
**Soil scientist and ecosystem services:** Olsson Associates  
**Hydrologist:** Limnotech

The Amant Foundation in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn, is the latest addition to New York’s cultural circuit. It also goes by the name Amant Art Campus, which inspires more than a few associations, above all the cloistered calm of, say, an East Coast university quad-rangle (canonically Princeton’s, but take your pick). The *campus*, Latin for untrammelled recreational ground, is a protective cocoon against the outside world and all its banal commitments. The other word that comes to mind is *microcosm*, suggesting miniaturist reproduction, as inside a snow globe.

On a recent visit to Amant, the latter analogue was a more visually apt fit. Two days prior, a winter storm had blanketed the city in several inches of snow that promptly turned to brown slush. In public parks graced with naturalistic features, hills and knolls had been slicked and blemished by children’s sleds. The reverie, however, persisted in Amant’s two inner courts, around which its four buildings are situated. The bounded courts are more than spillover space for installations and opening-night soirees, whose number has been small, due to pandemic concerns. Rather, the

pocket quads—particularly the one linking a pair of cast-in-place concrete structures, with its meandering path, manicured gravel, and temporary winter dress—reinforce a sense of order and stillness that are as indispensable to the experience as the art inside.

Whereas traditional campuses tend to accrete over generations, attesting to an accumulative munificence, this one has appeared all at once, thanks to a single benefactor. Founded in 2019 by Lonti Ebers, an art collector and trustee of the Museum of Modern Art, Amant allies itself with midcareer artists of wide-ranging repute, providing them with studios to create work (or not; fellows aren’t held to a quid pro quo) and the galleries to exhibit it. Ebers conceived of the center as a place in which to “slow down art-making processes” (that is, to suspend time, as inside a snow globe). The foundation also operates a residency program in a Benedictine abbey outside Siena, Italy, a standoffish architecture of a different order than that encountered at the Brooklyn outpost.

Designed by borough outfit SO-IL, the 21,000-square-foot compound has two front-

ages on Maujer Street, where warehouses, repair shops, a storage facility, and forlorn houses suffer each other in silence. Access is also granted on Grand Street, along which restaurants and a brewery have recently sprung up, offering refuge to the neighborhood’s aging gentrifiers. At their extremities, the buildings are blank and sturdy, relying on ribbed concrete walls and textured bricks for articulation. There is a protectiveness in their gait, but there are chinks in the armor. Walls recede from property lines, as if to tempt passersby to cross over inside. The most forbidding elevation, that of the brutalist residency block south of Maujer, is relieved by a single cut-out window at eye level. Its naïve outline is a sly, if slightly cynical, reference to the guileless apertures that Lina Bo Bardi punched into a concrete tower at the SESC Pompéia Factory in São Paulo. At SESC Pompéia the architect helped transform a former industrial works into a pleasure site for its city’s working-class residents; Amant’s core audience is rather more self-selecting.

Passage from one end of the campus to the other is seeded with rich moments





**Facing page:** A contemplative garden links the residency studio and a gallery/performance hall.

**Above left:** The reception area facing Grand Street

**Left:** The second-floor exhibition space in the main building

**Above:** The upper register of the main gallery block juts out over a pathway.

of discovery. Supple spatial cues, like the curve of an entrance wall, imply directionality. Thresholds are registered in changes in the pavement underfoot, which goes from smooth to slantly hatched at covered walkways, vestibules, and other connective spaces. The brick exteriors of the main gallery building are similarly in thrall to the diagonal; the cement clinkers are offset from one another, a simple method for creating visual interest that is difficult to execute. The second gallery building offers an alternative strategy for communicating depth: bricks laid out in a stack bond have been notched on their outer faces, creating a delicate field of shadow lines. The stack bonding, now completely flat, continues into an anteroom that leads to the gift shop (a virtual offshoot of left-wing publisher Verso Books) and a pair of bathrooms. Overhead, a skylight is dusted with snow.

As for the exhibition rooms, their dimensions and format vary. The best moment occurs in a double-height gallery that is topped on one side by a large milky light monitor with an eerie, atmospheric glow. Skylights in the largest gallery elicit a more natural, i.e., diurnal, tempo-

rality. In more than one instance, the architects proffer two expressions of a single idea and stage the results side-by-side. This coupling is a kind of preciousness, but small quantities go down well.

Amant is SO-IL's first stand-alone structure in New York, though they are currently at work on several others. Founding principal Florian Idenburg apprenticed at SANAA and served as the go-between when the Tokyo firm's design for the New Museum was under construction across the river. It was the early-to mid-aughts, when architects in the U.S. and Western Europe (Idenburg is Dutch) were obsessed with bigness and daft metaphor (intentional!) or else anxious about defining the contours of the new digital paradigm. That Idenburg and partner Jing Liu established their office in 2008 and subsequently adopted a stripped-back design tenor—uncomplicated forms gently elaborated upon with craftsman-like attentiveness—would seem congruent, but in truth, the tendency had begun earlier in the decade. They emerged from the same milieu as the Brussels-based OFFICE and, to an extent, the CDMX/New Yorkina office

PRODUCTORA. (Ruth Estévez, collaborator and wife of PRODUCTORA co-principal Wonne Ickx, is Amant's artistic director.)

This group didn't help to found an "ism," let alone a "movement," which requires more than elective affinities to get off the ground. But for Idenburg and Liu, who are married, elective affinities are the stuff of life and practice. Their work has grown over the years, but the inputs remain the same—a yen for sumptuous materials, a taste for the theatrical, and a slight impatience for solemnity. Their back catalogue abounds with operations for couplings and merging. Sometimes, the merger is a perfect fit. Other times, a unifying gesture is deployed too willfully, and leadenly, threatening to become cartoonish rather than the controlled brushstroke it so wants to be. Judging from the preliminary photographs, in a new project for a cultural center in France's Grand Est region (the northeastern point of l'Hexagone), the draftsmanship skews toward cartoonish.

But Amant, a more modest, delimited endeavor, exhibits a high degree of finesse (owing to efforts of Andrew Rejniak, the architect of record, and SO-IL senior associate Kevin

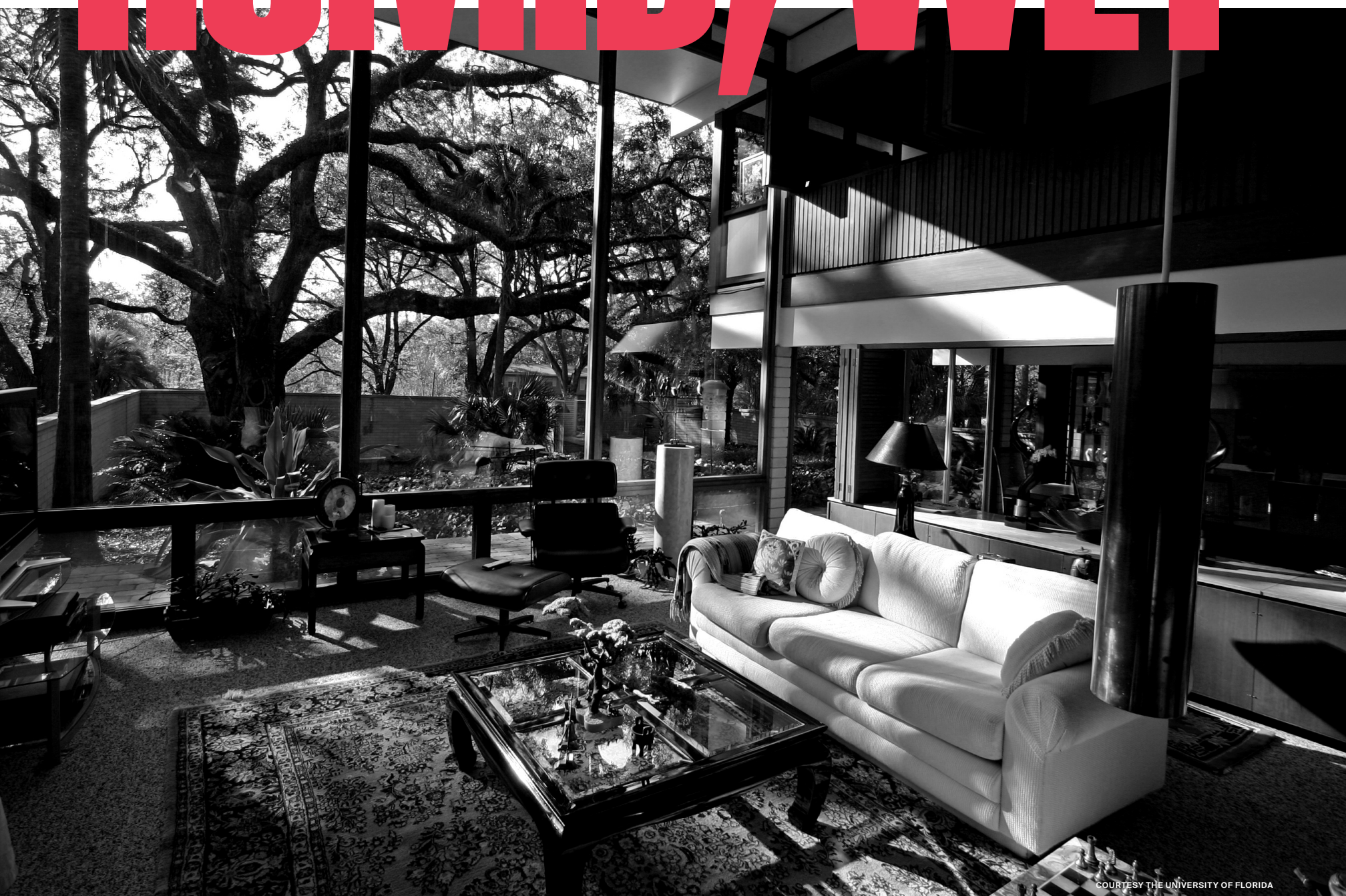
Lamyuktseung). Evidence of this is in ready supply, such as when the hem of the main gallery's prickly brick apron appears to lift up where the building meets the public right-of-way (really, a canny way of resolving a dip in the ground plane). Or in the deliberate joining of concrete and steel, brick and drywall. The detailing is painstaking, yet though the overall picture is highly controlled, the whole is nonetheless suffused with a casual air. A sign of inevitability? Perhaps. How else to explain the optical rhyme that occurs in the contemplative court linking the pair of cast-in-place concrete buildings, when the potbelly of the residency studio is mirrored by a shapely sculpture opposite?

At present there are no indicators of the "art processes" that Ebers finds necessary to slow down. (The uber-cool bookshop, however, is undergoing revisions, little more than half a year after Amant made its debut.) How artists-in-residence will engage the *campus*'s set of buildings remains to be seen, but they can be sure they'll be allowed to toil insulated from the world outside. At least for a time.

**Samuel Medina**



# HOT, BRIGHT, HUMID, WET



COURTESY THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

As climate change marches the tropics ever northward, Florida is looking like our future. Here we search for clues in the state's midcentury residences, read the tea leaves in annual floods and residential buyouts, and recline on the porch to consider it all.



# WHERE THE SUN SHINES

The phrase “midcentury modern” immediately calls up visions of California. But in the 1950s and early 1960s, Florida experienced a design awakening of its own.

*Under a separate cover we are forwarding a proposal for your new house in Gainesville. It is possibly self explanatory [sic] with the exception of the location of the screened-in patio. We have emphasized the screened-in patio because it is the most economical way to obtain a large flexible area. We think you will find it helpful in caring for the children as well as providing a spot which can always add extra dimensions to your living.*

*You will undoubtedly raise the question of the practicality of going through this patio to reach the bedroom wing. We have already built a small house utilizing fundamentally this idea and the family is unanimous in their praise of the patio as being the center of family activities...*

—1950 letter from Paul Rudolph to Mr. & Mrs. Francis B. Watson

“What is a ‘Florida house’?” The question was at the heart of the Florida House Seminar I taught for more than a decade, beginning in 2006. The purpose of the seminar was to look back to a time when the state’s architecture was nationally, even internationally, recognized as groundbreaking. My students and I explored case studies such as the Watson Residence in Gainesville, completed by Paul Rudolph in 1951; the Hiss Studio in Sarasota, a 1953 design attributed to Tim Seibert; Gene Leedy’s 1956 residence in Winter Haven; and the 1965 Cassisi and Haynes residences by Harry Merritt in Gainesville. We consulted original drawings (when available) or else relied on measurement, photography, drawings, and other methods to try to better understand this era of design before air-conditioning was commonplace.

Florida would seem an odd venue for architectural experimentation. The landscape is sand on a porous limestone substrate, unstable ground. The climate is hot, bright, humid, wet. There are two seasons, and even that is a stretch, with an omnipresent summer briefly interrupted by a cool “winter.” Similarly extreme conditions dominate the

landscape: the coastal edge, defined by the distant horizon, and the near landscape of the interior defined by dense local vegetation, which varies dramatically from the tropical south to the subtropical north. The latter more often than not occludes the former, so that in settlements and subdivisions along the coast, vistas can be difficult to come by.

In our studies, we discovered how often Florida’s early modern architecture has been compared to the Case Study Houses of Southern California. But there is one key difference that has escaped most commentators on the subject: Whereas in California the edge separating the indoors from out could be a thin glass partition, Florida’s climate and landscape demanded a very different relationship.

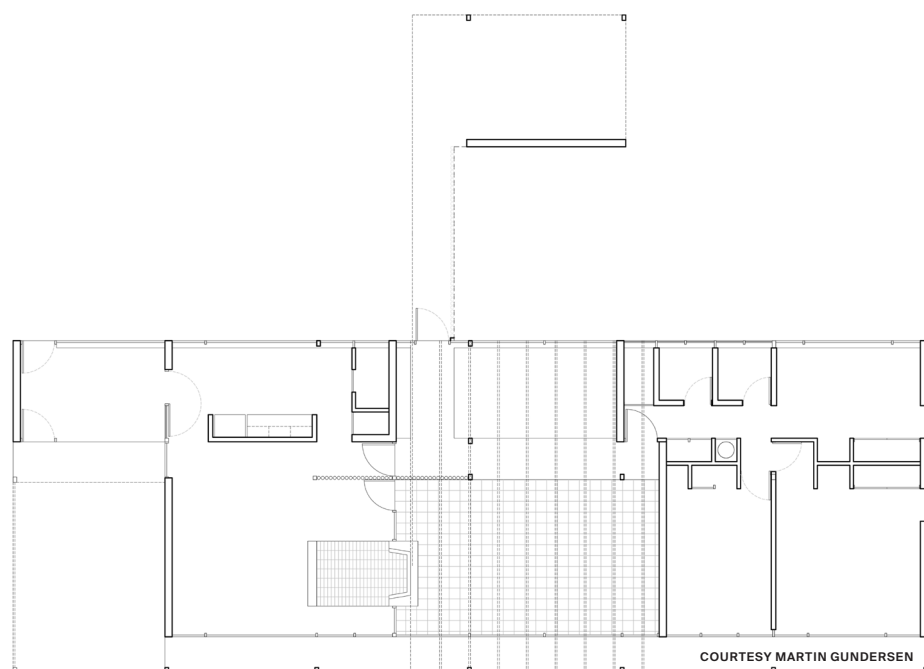
Midcentury architects working across the state borrowed from the landscape, and, what’s more, invited it into the domestic realm. They reenvisioned the domestic space as a series of relationships and flows that allowed occupants to move from one zone of a house to another, depending upon the time of year. The need for shade was a given, but as the epigraph to the left

reveals, from that need could spring forth spatial innovation.

But the Case Study comparison is apt in one way: Like their California counterparts, Rudolph, Seibert, Leedy, and Merritt believed themselves to be developing the implements for a new lifestyle. Not long after the completion of the house Rudolph designed for the Watsons, he sent his clients a few brochures on modern furniture. He didn’t mean to impose, he wrote, but offered the following prescription: “In a house where the glass goes to the floor the furniture should not be too heavy. It should definitely be raised on legs so that the space flows underneath.”

As the following case studies show, the architecture being built in Florida at mid-century marked the intersection of postwar optimism, risk-taking design, speculative provocations, and a heightened awareness of the nuances of landscape. But things would change quickly after air-conditioning became widely adopted. These houses serve as a reminder that architecture should endeavor to commune with the natural world, not be in opposition to it.

## Watson Residence



The author and his students re-created the house's floorplan from original documents.

The Florida House Seminar was prompted, in part, by the renewed conversation about sustainability, and taking a closer look at this architecture seemed obvious. Rudolph, famous for the homes he designed in Sarasota, became a natural focal point, as did the Watson Residence, which had long since been demolished. Prints of the original drawings, some correspondence, and one perspective were all that remained. We reconstructed the house from these materials to understand the spatial impact of the “screened-in” patio Rudolph was evidently proud of.

The house was divided by the courtyard

into clear public and private programs. The 1950 letter hints at the seasonal migration within the house to embrace changes in temperature throughout the year. Rudolph made the patio the largest space in the dwelling, justifying his decision with recourse to another design of his. Built in 1948, the Revere Quality House was the result of a competition sponsored by the Revere Corporation and ultimately drew 16,000 visitors, curious about the look of the new American architecture. Conceived as a prototype for modern living, the Revere Quality House set the template for many early modern homes in Florida.

## Hiss Studio



The one-bedroom, steel-framed residence betrays the influence of European modernism.

Philip Hiss, a wealthy socialite turned educator turned developer, nurtured the careers of Paul Rudolph and many other young designers who had traveled to Sarasota to become part of what would later be called the Sarasota School of Architecture. At the start of the 1950s Hiss initiated the Lido Shores development on Lido Key, north of Sarasota. It was intended to demonstrate that architecture would facilitate a new postwar American lifestyle, and many of the early dwellings were treated as prototypes, the most notable being Rudolph’s 1953 Umbrella House.

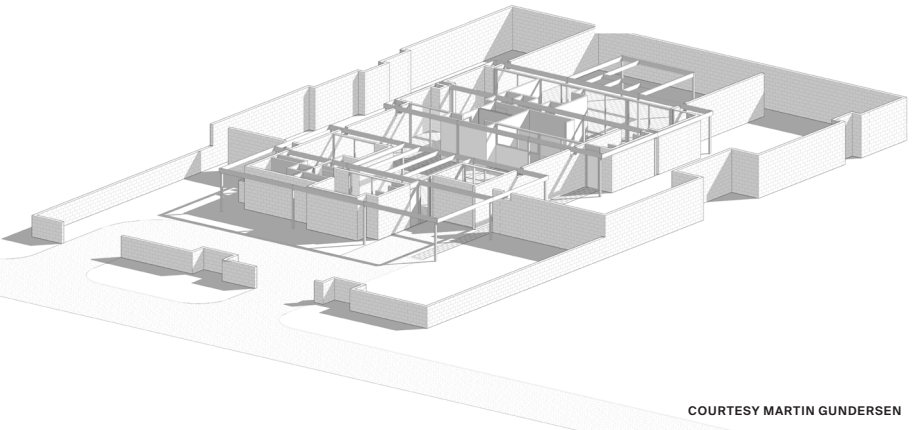
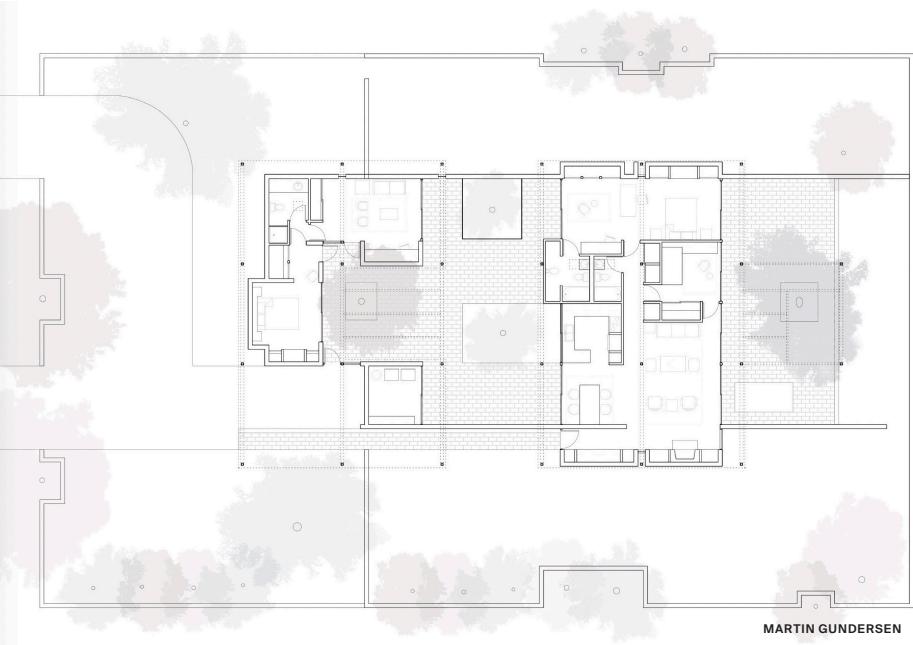
Hiss had traveled throughout the world and had built an exceptional library. He wanted an office/home to manage the Lido Shores development and a library to house all his books. The original drawings were simply labeled House 13, and later attributed to Tim Seibert, Architect. The site for the house was a spoil island created by the

dredging of New Pass. Very little vegetation existed on this artificially created landscape, giving Seibert and Hiss that rarest—and most modern—of things: a clean slate.

The Hiss Studio is unique among the other houses enumerated here, as it owes more to the California model, where nature is mediated by a single pane of glass and air-conditioning abounds. Seibert lifted the vitrine off the ground on 14 steel columns, which support the weight of the library shelves and an expansive 48-by-30-foot living room. (The house contains just one bedroom.) The 12-by-18-foot structural module supports 6-foot cantilevers at each corner. Despite his close collaboration with Rudolph, Hiss seems to have preferred Miesian stylings for his own abode. Yet the clarity of detailing, the material palette, and the clearly legible diagram make it an icon of Florida modernism.



# The Leedy Residence



**Top to bottom:** The floorplan illustrates the bounding walls and series of courts; a grand oak anchors the central walled garden; an axonometric explicates the construction logic.

One of Rudolph's first apprentices in Sarasota was Gene Leedy, a graduate of the University of Florida's School of Architecture. He soon struck out on his own and started a practice with a focus on residential design. In 1953, he relocated to Winter Haven leaving the coastline behind for a landscape of lakes in central Florida.

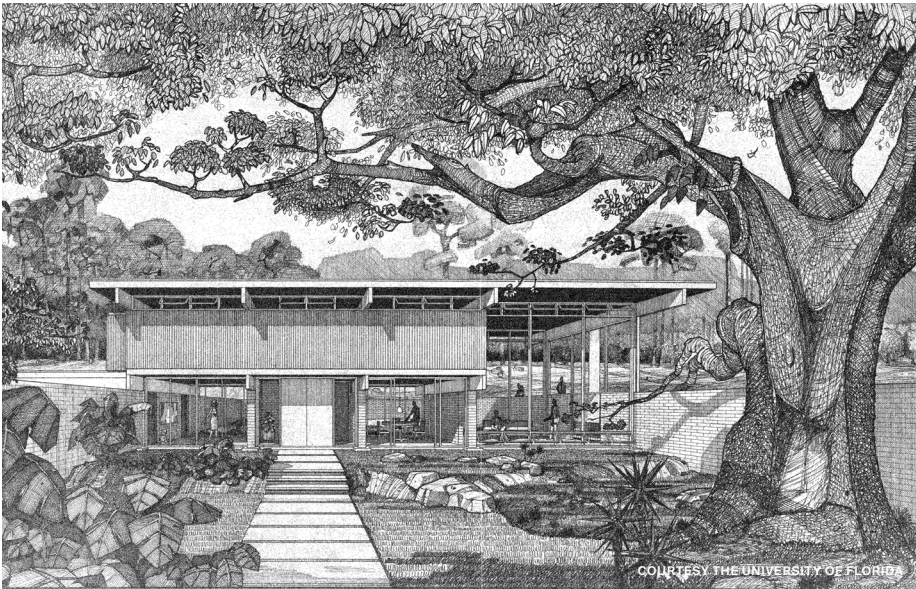
Leedy designed this house in 1956 as a prototype for a residential development in Winter Haven. The house uses bounding walls as a way to construct its own domain, a device that originated with Mies's unbuilt 1923 brick country house project and that Rudolph revived at his Lamolithic courtyard houses in Siesta Key. The masonry walls extend beyond the residence's footprint, creating an acoustic and visual buffer from

neighbors. Transparency, after all, demanded concomitant strategies for privacy.

The long east and west elevations are opaque, while the shorter ends of the house—those facing the inner courtyard and plantings—were fitted with floor-to-ceiling glass sliders. A courtyard south of the house left partly unpaved draws light into the living room. The bedrooms, bureau, and other domestic rooms embrace the three inner courts, which form a kind of walled garden.

The oak tree at its center has merged with the house into a singular entity, even as the structure has become more delicate and fragile with age. These Florida modern houses always suggested that their existence was transient.

# The Cassisi and Haynes Residences



**Top to bottom:** A wild-looking oak seems to rise out from the Haynes Residence; an original hand-drawn perspective of the Cassisi Residence depicting the main approach; Cassisi's airy living room is shaded by plentiful flora.

Harry Merritt left Harvard after Gropius suggested he move to Sarasota to work with Paul Rudolph. He then worked with Gene Leedy in Winter Haven before taking over the graduate design coordinator position at the University of Florida and establishing an architectural practice in Gainesville.

Florida's grand water oaks were favorites of many Florida designers, perhaps none more so than Merritt. He often included oaks in his residential projects and even incorporated their "structural" lessons of compression and cantilever in his university lectures. He deployed the oak as an ordering device at two standout Gainesville projects. The first, the Cassisi Residence, uses

bounding walls to enclose the tree, which is on full view to the glazed 20-by-20-foot volume containing the hearth. At the Haynes Residence, building and landscape merge to the fullest extent, or so was the intent. In one of Merritt's ink-on-vellum drawings, the house seems barely to exist at all, with more draftsmanly skill lavished on the trademark tree. The deep shade created by the oak's overstory, not to mention the compelling light effects it produced, was an ideal model for the Florida climate.

**Martin Gundersen is professor emeritus at the University of Florida School of Architecture.**



# SINKING FEELING

## Voluntary home buyouts are underway in the Florida Keys. But how effective are they?

“When I bought my house in 1995, this was never an issue...and it’s progressively gotten more and more and more with different years being different levels of flooding,” explained Key Largo resident Emily Stewart at a June 2021 special meeting of Florida’s Monroe County Board of County Commissioners. Stewart spoke out at the meeting to express her frustration over 90 consecutive days of flooding in 2019 and 70 consecutive days in 2020, due to seasonal “king tides,” which are increasing because of climate change. Stewart asked the commissioners to act quickly to address the issue, specifically requesting roadway and infrastructural improvements.

Impacts like flooding are making the climate crisis very real for Floridians, like those in Monroe County, a largely rural

area on the southern tip of the state that includes the Florida Keys. Back in 1974, much of the county was designated an Area of Critical State Concern by the Florida Legislature, which recognized the diversity of resources of statewide significance and called for a land management system to aid in the area’s protection. Since then, it has seen repeated damage from natural disasters, including 2017’s Hurricane Irma, and remains highly vulnerable to sea level rise and extreme weather events.

Florida’s flatness, abundant coastline, and frequency of tropical storms, paired with continued development in at-risk areas, make the state extremely prone to flooding. According to research from First Street Foundation, 4.3 million residential properties in the United States face

“substantial flood risk,” and 1 million of them are in Florida. The vulnerability of these properties translates into the highest concentration of expected economic damage in any state, totaling \$8 billion in potential annual losses.

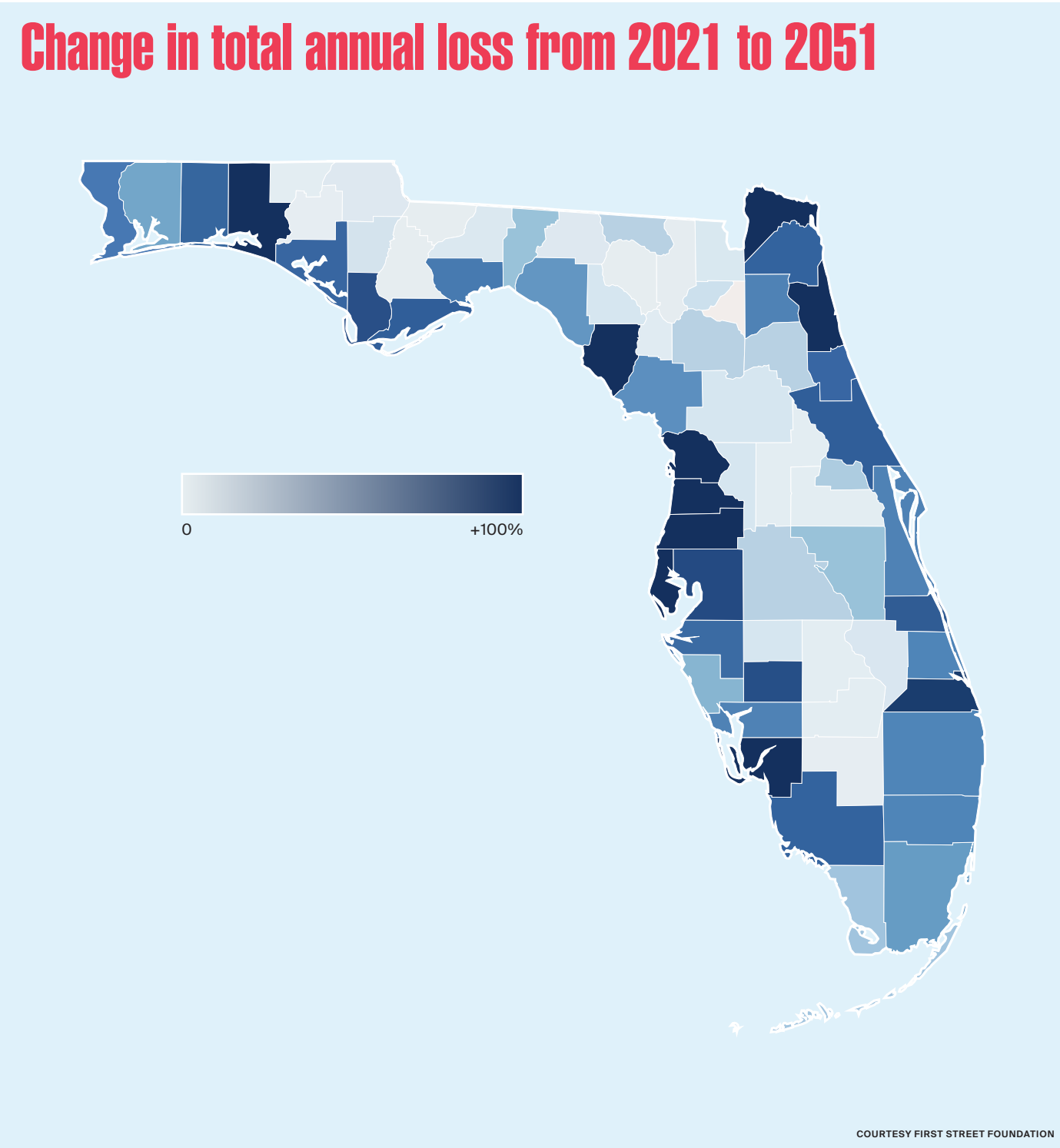
Voluntary buyout programs are one option for homeowners looking for a way out and can ultimately be less expensive for the federal government than repeated flood insurance payouts through the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s National Flood Insurance Program. Monroe County oversees multiple buyout programs, including the Rebuild Florida Voluntary Home Buyout Program, created in 2019 in response to Irma with federal community development block grants allocated to disaster recovery. Out of the \$44 million in Rebuild Florida

funding made available to 11 local governments, Monroe County received \$15 million. Prioritizing low-to-moderate-income areas, the county uses the money to purchase properties at market value, then demolishes existing improvements and adapts the land for public use, such as stormwater infrastructure, recreation, or open space.

In early December 2021, Monroe County extended the registration deadline for the buyout program until further notice. When the county submitted its application for Rebuild Florida grant monies in 2019, it identified a pool of 60 potential applicants. However, an extended administrative process, the sale of properties on the open market, and other factors caused that number to dramatically decrease. The Monroe County Land Authority (MCLA) reports the program now has around 20 applicants, with most located in the Big Pine area. The applicants’ properties are dispersed, which inherently limits the public uses possible with aggregated properties, but it’s a challenge the MCLA is prepared for. Since its creation in 1988, it has acquired or assisted in the acquisition of over 4,600 parcels, including 112 parcels totaling over 100 acres in 2020 alone.

Despite government action to reduce risk and damage, the real estate and development community’s response to risk assessments and climate change data remains mixed. According to law firm Berger Singerman’s 2019 South Florida Real Estate Survey, only 35 percent of South Florida real estate professionals felt climate change was the most pressing issue the market faced, and 58 percent indicated that climate change would have zero impact on how they planned or developed. In the 2020 survey, climate change slipped even further in relevance, losing out to concerns about remote working and migration induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus on such factors isn’t unwarranted. For those living and building in high-risk areas, the inability to secure mortgages or insurance will inevitably have more impact than climate change projections.

For my colleague Jeffrey Carney, who directs the Florida Institute for Built Environment Resilience at the University of Florida, buyout programs pose broader questions about resilience and how to holistically address community challenges. As buyouts reduce density and the resident population, a community is left with a decreased tax base, maintenance challenges, gaps in the physical fabric, and costly adaptation of utility and transportation infrastructure. He also notes that a focus on mitigation or efforts to lessen the impacts distracts us from addressing the root causes of climate change. Carney goes on to explain that communities need coherent, multipronged approaches to address climate change, with buyout programs being one available tool. For Monroe County and other Florida communities administering them, Carney points to the need for adjusted development patterns and the use of complementary tools to deter new construction in at-risk areas: “What is the net benefit if you remove four houses from a community and a developer goes and adds six new ones?”



According to First Street Foundation, in Florida the annual average loss per property due to flooding, currently at \$8,788, will grow to \$15,557 in 2051—an increase of 77 percent. The state currently has 906,465 residential properties at substantial risk of flooding, which is about a quarter of the national total. Over the next 30 years, an additional 67,069 properties are expected to undergo financial loss from flood damage.

**Sarah Gamble is an assistant professor at the University of Florida School of Architecture.**



# FLOAT YOUR PORCH

## An architect glimpses the future of climate change from his West Florida cabin.

The following excerpt is from the first chapter of University of Florida professor Charlie Hailey’s new book, *The Porch: Meditations on the Edge of Nature* (University of Chicago Press). From the telltale exterior of a humble cabin by the Homosassa River, the architect/writer addresses the effects of climate change and sea level rise as experienced from this place, while ruminating on prec-

edents as varied as a screened sleeping pavilion on the roof of the White House, the stoa of ancient Greece, and the work of Sigurd Lewerentz and Louis Kahn. Ultimately, his musings accumulate into a sort of manifesto offering up the porch as a typology capable of reacclimating humankind to a natural world that it has thrown off-balance.

**Aaron Seward**



ALL DRAWINGS CHARLIE HAILEY

In addition to writing, the author records his impressions in blind contour drawings.

A manatee’s breath drifts across the porch screen. It is a sound so delicate yet insistent that I stop breathing. I count time in the rings of smoothed water that drift with the river’s current toward the ocean. I listen for the next breath but this manatee is moving fast, and its footprints blend back into the burnished roll and flicker of the river that holds its own breath between tides. The manatees are on the move this January day as Florida warms after a cold snap. What we call fire weather is what most other parts of the country think of as winter, but manatees know the subtle changes of the lower subtropics. They feel the air through water, like we feel it in porches.

That was the fourth manatee I’ve heard in the past hour. The extraordinary can

become routine, but it never gets old. Set back from the river, we don’t always see them, except when we catch a black snout sending out its wake like a skidding duck or a piece of driftwood plowing the current, and except that time when a mother came into our lagoon with her calves—the littlest looked like a puppy. There’s another one, louder, closer, but on a porch earshot isn’t necessarily eyeshot. It rained last night, and the cedars drip like metronomes. A kingfisher calls, far enough away to mix with the gentle lapping of breeze and river on limestone. It is quiet today, but it feels like anything can happen. I hear my own breath again, waiting.

...



This porch where I write will soon be underwater. For seven decades it rode hurricanes and winter storms. In another seven, the sea will cover the boards where three layers of flaking paint sandpaper my bare feet. We do not complain about this reality, neither the porch’s vulnerability nor the paint’s inconstancy. In a position both privileged and ill-advised, I sit here by choice, aware of what’s coming and what’s at stake, saturated by a knowledge of this place and its climate—one that is constantly and dramatically changing. Here, on the porch, theory meets practice. There’s the idea of a changing climate, and then there’s actually witnessing its effects. Here on a porch, the unseen is inescapable, like the manatee. And the mullet who just splashed in the brackish water taut with low tide. I didn’t see the fish, but I heard the dazed flump of reentry into a river saltier than it was last year, and now watch the ripples widen from this joyful leap.

In our time here, the porch’s floor has been inundated once, and nearly a second time. A fragile wrack line still clings to the porch’s concrete pile, just below the wood framing of its floor. The flecks of cedar needles, tiny bits of shell and soil, left there from this fall’s hurricane, seem trivial

compared to what happened up north in Mexico Beach, but it’s all part of the same thing, this living on the coast, which is really living in the coast, deeply embedded in the littoral. Not fixed in place, but held adrift between tides, floating. Like all the things that Hurricane Hermine and her 7-foot storm surge set afloat in our porch and its cabin, four years ago.

When we took the boat out to the cabin the next day, the tannin-stained water was still lapping onto the porch. When my son and I stepped up onto the porch, we walked into a washing machine that had just finished its cycle, one set for heavy soil and turgid water moving this way and that. Even though no doors were ajar or windows broken, it was like someone had ransacked the place, leaving it turned in on itself. Like nature was trying to find us, trying to send a message.

When I walk out on the porch now, I instinctively check the water for signs of change. I watch and hold my breath. I am teaching myself to sit on a porch. I am learning to read what’s around me. Checking for sign, I scan the water. Floating.

...





The porch and its cabin were built in 1950, one of the first on the Homosassa River. Here, amid the river's latticed marriage with the gulf, the fishing is good, so good that Winslow Homer, Grover Cleveland, Thomas Edison, and John Jacob Astor all came looking for redfish, trout, and tarpon.

Land and water are relative terms here. Where one starts and the other stops changes every day, every hour, every minute. If pressed, we could say the cabin is halfway between land and water, halfway between the mainland and the gulf. The cabin is boat-access only, and our car is 2.5 miles away, the same distance that our pontoon travels to reach the open water, along the Homosassa's winding channel. I call it a channel because the Coast Guard marks it with buoys and a few fixed posts. But the metal shafts rust through at their water lines, the floating drums drag with flood tides and storms, and oysters build new shoals on wayward crab traps, haunting the channels as ghost traps. The marked channel is unreliable, and the Homosassa can be treacherous, even for boaters who know it, like the sheriff, who once bumped the bottom twice in a low winter tide at the Hell Gate narrows, where my son and I were gathering boat propellers. The town of Homosassa used to close that pass at night with actual gates. From our porch, we hear skegs, props, and even the whole lower units of motors grind across oyster bars and limestone. When the shrimp boats gear down, they are passing those narrow gates of hell.

Homosassa isn't Venice, the cabin is no palazzo, and our pontoon—except when we pole it over mudflats in winter—has no kinship with gondolas, but we feel a connection to a place where daily life's reliance on water has put it at risk. Those islands are subsid-ing as the water rises, tourists ride outsize vessels whose wake threatens fragile shores, and, like Venetians entering their palazzos from rear canals, we turn the pontoon off the Homosassa and head up a creek to the back dock that is our entrance. That dock connects to a raised wooden walk that takes

us up to the back door. When high waters bring the sea across the ground and under our cabin, it is acqua alta and I think of the elevated walkways put out across Venice.

A wooden sign above the back door greets you: Welcome Aboard. This cabin is floating, and if it were a ship, the porch would be at its prow, looking out on the river. Sometimes in a storm, the porch feels more like a crow's nest, rising, falling, tilting on high seas. The cabin sits back from the river enough that boaters catch only fleeting views. Cedars and oaks arch over a small lagoon that connects with the river through a break in the limestone bank. Behind the lagoon's dock, the gray paint of the board and batten matches the patina of the aluminum roof. The screened porch covers the width of the original cabin, and an open deck to its side fronts an addition from the 1980s. The shadow-dark screens of the porch push the cabin even deeper into the trees, plunged into a forest girded by water.

The porch brings a bit of order to the entropy of this landscape that is flooding, eroding, and sinking. Its islands are lace-work. Its sinks and rivulets are scoured by rain, tide, and storm. The land looks the same from above at 5 feet or 5,000. A piece of broken limestone from along the river is a topographic map—a carved and crumbling chart of the whole region, built on rocky sponge geologists call drowned karst, defined by the way brackish water engorges and habitually floods this porous limestone. Our cabin swims in it. But the porch is a rectangle, a finite geometric figure on a fractal coastline. It measures exactly 118 inches deep and 236 inches wide. A ratio of one to two, about 10 feet by 20 feet. The porch is two perfect squares clinging to the side of what had been a one-room cabin, which is also a square, 20 feet by 20 feet. That degree of precision is surprising out where foundations sink, walls list, rust dances, and mildew blossoms. I had to check those numbers twice.

...



A house has its own air. It may hold air like a sealed Ball jar or, if it's one of the old houses I've lived in, breathe air like a torn shirt or split jeans. Airtight or leaky, the walls of a house still protect from weather and the changeable conditions of open air. A porch holds nature's air, and going out on a porch has traditionally offered changes in climate and perspective.

When you step out on a porch now, you board a vessel on a sea of change. As you sit there, time brings shifts in temperature and breezes, the ebb and flow of sounds, drifts of smell, an upwelling of vision. But today, firmly lodged in the Anthropocene where human activity governs, a porch brings other changes as well. Whether you realize it or not, you and your porch are moving. Open to the environment, your porch shifts climatically, while its conditioned house essentially stays put.

I remember reading in *Granta* that the average English garden was effectively moving 66 feet south every day, as it warmed. Four and a half miles a year. That was in 2003, when reports fretted about the prospect of a single Celsius degree rise in global temperature. Now we regularly talk about two or three times that—a pace that sets the Northern Hemisphere's porches racing southward. They leave their air-conditioned houses in a wake of energy consumption and hermetic isolation.

Today the Homosassa porch moves south a hundred feet every day. Since we bought the cabin seven years ago, we have effectively moved to Tampa, 50 miles away. Current estimates for the next decade send the porch farther south, past Florida's Venice and on to Naples. When the porch arrives at that latitude, north Florida will have become south Florida.

But our porch is also heading west. This part of the Gulf of Mexico is exceedingly flat, and a local rule of thumb says that water depth changes a foot for every mile of distance. Assessments of the rise in the gulf's levels vary, but a conservative estimate of 1 inch every two years would mean a foot every 24, and would place our porch—towing its cabin with it, since sea level rise happens whether the air conditioner is on or not—in open waters in another 70 years. As dramatic as that might seem, it feels slower than the porch's plunge southward. But when you factor in spring tides and storm surges, we would do well to have half that time.

On its voyage south and west to the tropics and out to sea, our porch passes mangroves and Brazil pepper trees heading north. Red mangroves are moving farther and farther up the coast. They ride the warmer temperatures, making land as fast as it is receding. They don't mind the saltier water, and they have adapted to the sea's rise and fall. As the mangroves move north, they also head east, slowly and methodically inland. Clinging to the river's edge, the mangroves are silent witnesses and respectful ushers as native coastal trees also move inland, away from the salt of rising seas. Their retreat is hurried along by the invasive pepper trees that thrive in the warming temperatures and shove aside red cedars and live oaks that are still alive but declining.

On its westward voyage, the porch also encounters rampikes, trees that have died as saltwater replaces freshwater. Each turn of the river toward the gulf opens a longer vista, bringing more rampikes into view. After Hell Gate, countless palm trunks prick the horizon, a forest of telephone poles. Hammocks of cedars and a few oaks cluster among the palms like so many mourners. Others are solitary, roaming the horizons of marsh grass and mangroves. Their skeletal remains, mostly cedars, some of them ancient, already look like driftwood long staked in the ground.

Moving back and forth between salty gulf and freshwater spring, it becomes clear that the porch occupies the cusp of this transition, this rampike wave, this roll of pepper trees and mangroves, a brackish tipping point between land and sea. The porch floats like driftwood in a slackened tide. Porches wait, and this one, loosely anchored to the limestone of its ancient coral bed, pauses with chain pulled tight, and its ropes straining, as the flukes of its foundations still try to dig in.

And so the porch charts its course. It is a moving vessel on a flood tide of change, yet it tarries in one place. It waits as change approaches. Sit out here for a little while, and you will feel the weather turn. Sit out here for a little longer, and climate change will come to you.

On a porch, you travel without leaving home.

**Charlie Hailey is an architect and writer and a professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Florida.**



# 26 Focus

In the decade after World War II, Florida's population nearly doubled, leading to a boom of residential construction up and down the state. That growth continues to this day, despite national stagnation. Since the last census Florida has increased its population by more than 14 percent, even as much of its low-lying littoral geography began to disappear beneath rising seas. So how are Floridians housing themselves? In the following pages, we highlight three case studies from the Sunshine State that point to promising housing solutions. Additionally, we call out the latest innovations—from IoT wares to uber-efficient HVAC systems—in the residential construction space.

# Residential Construction

**AN FOCUS**

January/February 2022





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# 28 Case Study

## A'N FOCUS

January/February 2022

## Industrial Proof

The Five Twelve House take its cues from nearby port structures.

**Architect:** Traction Architecture  
**Location:** Tampa, Florida

**Structural engineer:** Catalano Engineering  
**General contractor:** Traction Construction

**Translucent cladding:** Kalwall  
**Furniture:** Apparatus Studio  
**Ceramics:** Heath Ceramics  
**Lighting:** Rich Brilliant Willing

Situated on the channel side of Davis Island, facing the Port of Tampa, Traction Architecture's Five Twelve House is a resilient residence that revels in the excitement and precariousness of its location. Traction founder Jody Beck found inspiration in the 1950s ranch houses that predominate on the island, the purity of the forms of the industrial port structures across the channel, and the very, very large boats that pass by regularly. "We love it," said Beck. "It's really cool. When you're in the house you see freighters and cruise ships go by—like a giant moving wall or a building moving across the horizon. It's a crazy scale."

The other main design driver was the FEMA flood line, which on this 50-by-110-foot lot is 10 feet above sea level. With the site at 5 feet above sea level and code requiring living spaces to be 1 foot above the flood line, Traction had to perch the living spaces of the 2,700-square-foot house 6 feet above grade. That change in elevation formed the section, called out by a switchback blackened plate steel staircase with open risers that carves out height-and-a-half spaces throughout the interior. The main (second) floor is left completely open, such that "you could throw a ball from one side to the other," said Beck. Recessed balconies on either end can also be kept open for natural cross ventilation when the weather is mild, which it usually is from November to April.

On the upper level, three bedrooms and an office are separated by a double-height void overlooking the dining area. A bridge—made from the same graphite steel as the stairs—spans this little atrium, which is topped by a Kalwall skylight, oriented on the north side of the gable roof for diffuse natural illumination. Scissor trusses supporting the roof allow the gable to be expressed inside, where prominent white oak surfaces give the impression of a ship's cabin.

The structure is robust, able to take on any hurricane. The poured-in-place reinforced concrete columns, tie beams, and rake beams are infilled with concrete block and finished with stucco. The standing seam metal roof is equipped with photovoltaic panels for on-site electricity generation. And just as the living spaces are elevated above the flood line, so too are the mechanical systems (concealed within the spaces of the trusses). Five Twelve House is tough, which is not to say rough and ready, and thoughtfully incorporates its influences. **Aaron Seward**



SEAMUS PAYNE



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SEAMUS PAYNE

**Top:** A recessed balcony off the main living space looks across the Seddon Channel toward Port Tampa Bay.

**Middle left:** The office above the main entry is open to the top floor.

**Middle right:** White oak floors and ceilings in the bedrooms create the feeling of a ship's cabin.

**Far left:** The house's occupiable floors are set higher than the FEMA flood line, at 6 feet above grade.

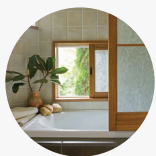
**Left:** A Kalwall skylight above the dining area admits milky, diffuse light.



# Pulp Studio was founded in 1996 by Lynda and Bernard Lax out of necessity.

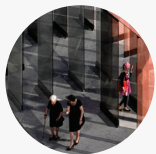
They couldn't find a glass fabricator to create custom glass for their new home, so they developed a way to embed decorative paper into glass for their dining room, kitchen, and powder room. Their background in the textile industry and their business acumen and creativity fueled the success of Pulp Studio. Over the years, Lynda and Bernard pioneered decorative glass for commercial applications and grew their company into a leader and innovator in the glass industry.

Today, Pulp Studio has more than 150 employees whose capabilities include bending, color coating, glass carving, direct-to glass print imaging, chemical strengthening and more. Every project, whether it's creating glass panels for the Space Needle's observation deck or printing glass installations for community sculptures, is another opportunity for Pulp Studio to further enrich the idea of glass as an artistic endeavor.



**1996**

In its early days, Pulp Studio works in a 3,500 sq. ft. building with just three employees: Bernard and Lynda Lax, plus Pedro Olmedo, Pulp Studio's current VP of Production.



**2010**

Pulp Studio introduces Chromavision™ that utilizes high precision fabrics as a substrate for its unique metallic coating and Ombra™, which achieves a solar heat gain coefficient superior to that of other insulated glass units.



**2013**

An additional facility with 8,000 sq. ft. of space is opened.

**2016**

Pulp Studio opens a new, 150,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility that enables the team to print, bend, and temper glass all under one roof. The \$3.5 million dollar investment includes state-of-the-art machinery that no other U.S. glass fabricating company had in one facility.



**2020**

Already a leader in recycling, Pulp Studio installs a \$3 million solar panel and battery storage system taking more of their operations off the grid. The move wins an award for sustainability. Pulp Studio also launches Precision Edge® Technology, Vetrite, and doubles daily output capacity of their 150,000 square foot facility.

**2001**  
Pulp Studio introduces SwitchLite™ Privacy Glass.



**2008**  
Pulp Studio adds Artwerks division to assist designers in artistic development of their projects and introduces PINTURA™, the first color sheet glass product on the market with a water-based coating system



**2012**  
Pulp Studio buys California Glass Bending as a subsidiary to combine specialty glass and bending under the same roof. The team moves into a 30,000 sq. ft. facility.



**2017**  
Five years after its purchase, Pulp Studio fully integrates California Glass Bending

**2019**  
Pulp Studio introduces an innovative ultra-thin product called DermaGlass™, which weighs considerably less than the industry standard and provides unparalleled durability.



**2021**  
The Pulp team loses one of its beloved leaders, Bernard Lax, but celebrates its 25th anniversary with plans to maintain continuity, cutting edge products, unprecedented quality and the highest levels of service, exactly as Bernard would have wanted.



**25** PULPSTUDIO  
YEARS OF INNOVATIONS IN GLASS



# 30 Case Study

## A'N FOCUS

January/February 2022

## Modern Family

The Zahrada townhomes tap into Sarasota's midcentury modern legacy.

**Architect:** Halflants + Pichette Architects  
**Location:** Sarasota, Florida

**Structural engineer:** Wilson Structural  
**Civil engineer:** AM Engineering  
**MEP:** Hahn Engineering  
**Landscape architect:** DWY Landscape Architects  
**Geotechnical consultant:** Universal Engineering Sciences

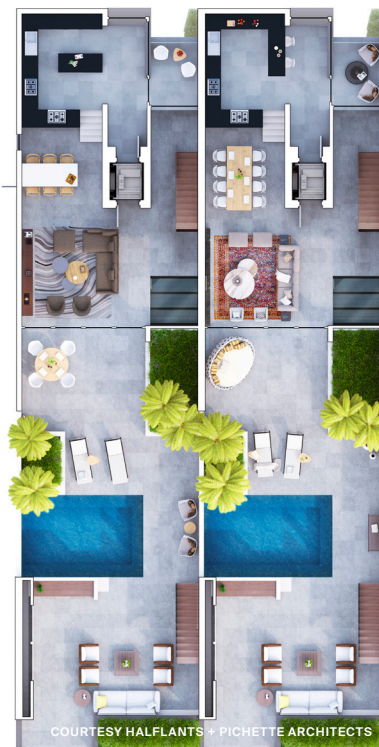
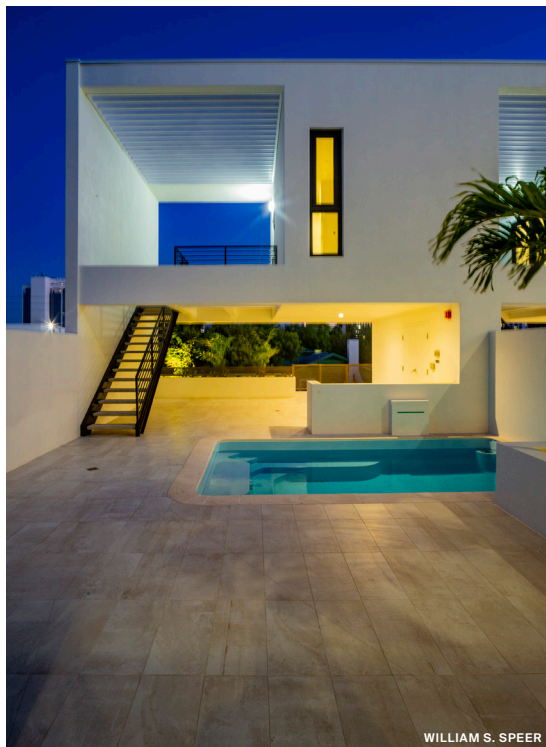
Over the past decade, Sarasota's Rosemary District has transformed from a sparse and neglected stretch north of downtown into one of the city's liveliest corridors. In 2014, the City Commission tripled the allowable density in the district from 25 to 75 units per acre, setting off a buying frenzy among developers, who have since introduced over 1,700 new homes and numerous restaurants, shops, and offices.

The new developments come in all shapes and sizes, but few are as considered as Zahrada, a mixed-use complex with mid-century flair. Large apertures that recall those used by Paul Rudolph in his 1950s residential designs help set the row of white stucco-clad townhomes on 4th Street apart from its neighbors, while an intricate section (also redolent of the architect) neatly delineates the ground-floor office and retail spaces.

"Like Rudolph, we always try to take advantage of Sarasota's agreeable climate and provide nice, shaded outdoor spaces, and seamless transitions from inside to out," said John Pichette, founding principal of local firm Halflants + Pichette Architects.

Each of the six high-end homes contains four bedrooms, a pool, a detached granny flat, and an oversize two-car garage. Impact glazing frames views of the inner courtyard, which features plantings by DWY Landscape Architects. To Pichette's point, sliding doors and undifferentiated concrete flooring extend the main living area into the (enclosed) pool patio. The flooring also mitigates the transmission of noise to the storefronts below.

This winter, construction will begin nearby on Zahrada 2, also designed by Halflants + Pichette. Though it follows a more traditional mixed-use format than its predecessor, Zahrada 2 will take greater advantage of the new zoning allotments by upping the occupancy area to 22 units, or 18 homes and 4 retail/office leases. There's a dash of Rudolph in there, too. **Sophie Aliece Hollis**



**Top:** The project features wry allusions to Paul Rudolph's Sarasota School, such as the deep overhangs that frame the top-floor bedrooms. Retail and office spaces are located on the ground floor, facing 4th Street.

**Middle, left:** Each of the six townhomes includes an accessory dwelling unit at the rear.

**Middle, right:** Plans of the main living areas (left) and upper bedrooms (right)

**Bottom:** The complex section incorporates amenities like a pool and patio, as well as a two-car garage and storage.



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## Houses of Cards

At Heron, a two-tower complex in downtown Tampa, angled structural walls create visual excitement.

**Architecture:** Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates  
**Location:** Tampa, Florida

**Interior designer:** Cecconi Simone  
**Construction manager:** Coastal Construction  
**Structural engineer:** DeSimone Consulting Engineers  
**MEP engineer:** Cosentini Associates  
**LEED, WELL, and energy modeling consultant:** Thornton Tomasetti  
**Exterior wall and roofing consultant:** Vidaris  
**Landscape architect:** Raymond Jungles  
**Concrete consultant:** Red Hough Associates

Heron, designed by Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF), is part of the first phase of Water Street Tampa, a major development that is doubling the size of downtown while seeking to be the world's first WELL-certified neighborhood. The LEED Gold-certified mixed-use project comprises two "sister" towers of rental apartments over a retail-and-parking podium.

"We were inspired by notions of wellness and how people function and live in and around these buildings," said KPF design principal Trent Tesch. "We set out early on to think about what we could do from a planning and logistics perspective to make the towers elegant and straightforward and build with as little stress on the environment as possible."

Constrained by a tight budget and truncated schedule, Tesch's team cast about for ways to turn these limitations to their advantage. Working with the client to establish project priorities, which included maximizing daylighting into and views out of the residences as well as a pool deck, the architects developed a computational model with which to test myriad massing options—upwards of 400—before hitting on the most optimal orientations for the towers and their terraces. This methodology reduced the design time line from several months to a mere three weeks.

On each tower, terraces provide shading for monolithic laminated glass windows set between dark gray stucco walls and bounce indirect light deep within the units. Structural board-formed concrete partition walls add texture. The walls start out orthogonal at the base of the towers and bend at increasingly agitated angles as they move up the elevation, lending some intriguing formal play to the inchoate skyline. The aluminum railings are an off-the-shelf product, chosen for their elegant profiles.

The parking stack sports a different cladding solution: perforated aluminum panels set at varying angles and painted a copper color that references the brick warehouses belonging to the local Cuban cigar industry. (Heron's client was adamant that the architects avoid using the color white on exteriors—this is Tampa, not Miami.) The mechanical suite sits atop the parking deck, whose roof is vegetated with local grasses and crisscrossed by paths connecting the two towers. At the corner of Beneficial Drive and Channelside Drive, KPF pulled the podium 60 feet back from the curb to create a little plaza and supported the tower above on a split board-formed concrete column.

"We feel good about the building," said Tesch. "There's a real truth and honesty about materiality and structure. You can see the units, you know where the parking is, you know the amenity floor. Like a salad, you can see all the layers." **Aaron Seward**



**Top:** Angled board-formed concrete walls partition the towers' terraces and create a playful counterpoint to the material's severity.

**Bottom, left:** The architects pulled one corner of the podium back 60 feet to create a plaza and supported the tower above on a split concrete column.

**Middle, right:** The parking levels are clad in perforated aluminum panels that ventilate the garage.

**Bottom, right:** Terraces shade the monolithic laminated glass windows while bouncing indirect light deep into the interiors.





## Surfaces

These cleverly engineered surfaces—produced using natural, composite, and synthetic components—are both stylish and incredibly durable. As earth tones, a subtle organicism, and bold geometric forms return to the fore, these materials reflect changing trends but also come in a wide range of variants for those looking to go their own way. By Adrian Madlener



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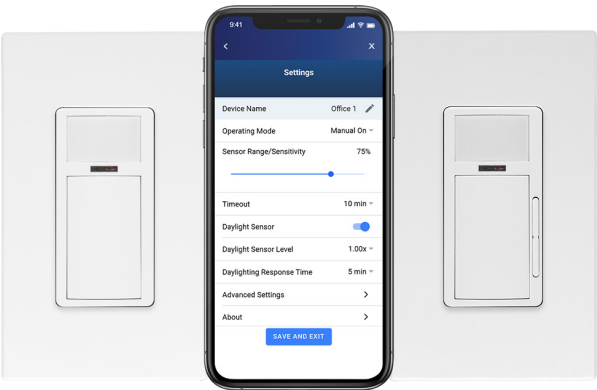


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## Adhesives, Coatings & Sealants

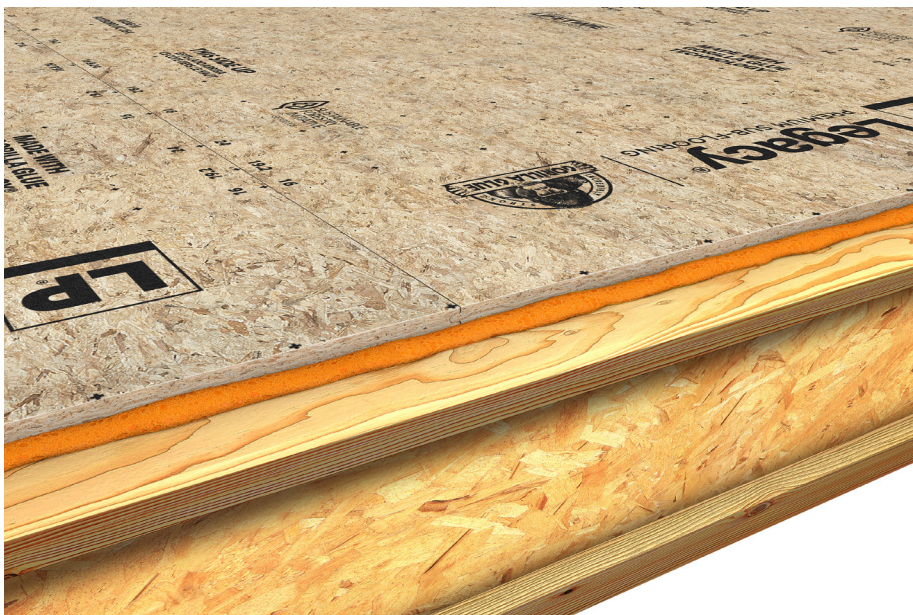
Though largely invisible, these solutions are essential for making any home airtight and resistant to whatever mother nature throws its way. Informed by the latest research in efficiency and disaster preparedness, the following products can barricade a residential building against fires, floods, and hurricanes. By Adrian Madlener



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Heating & Cooling

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By Adrian Madlener



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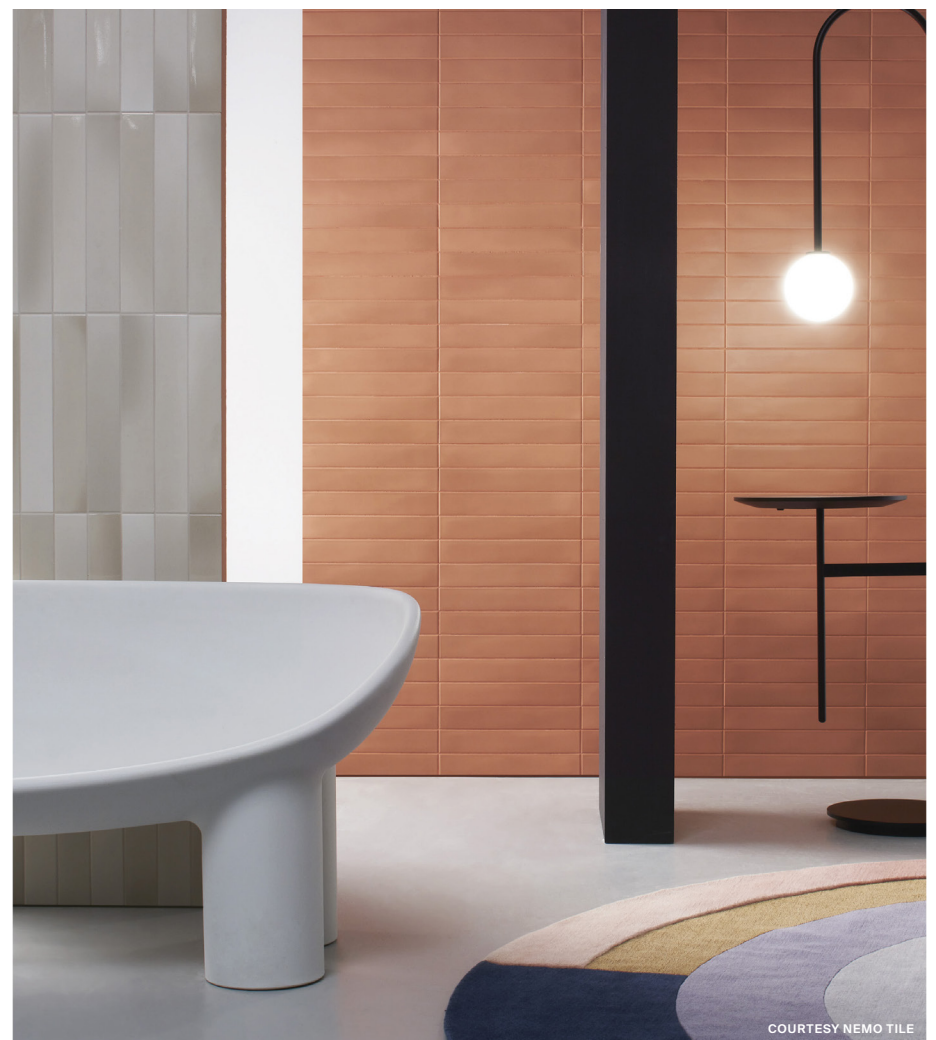
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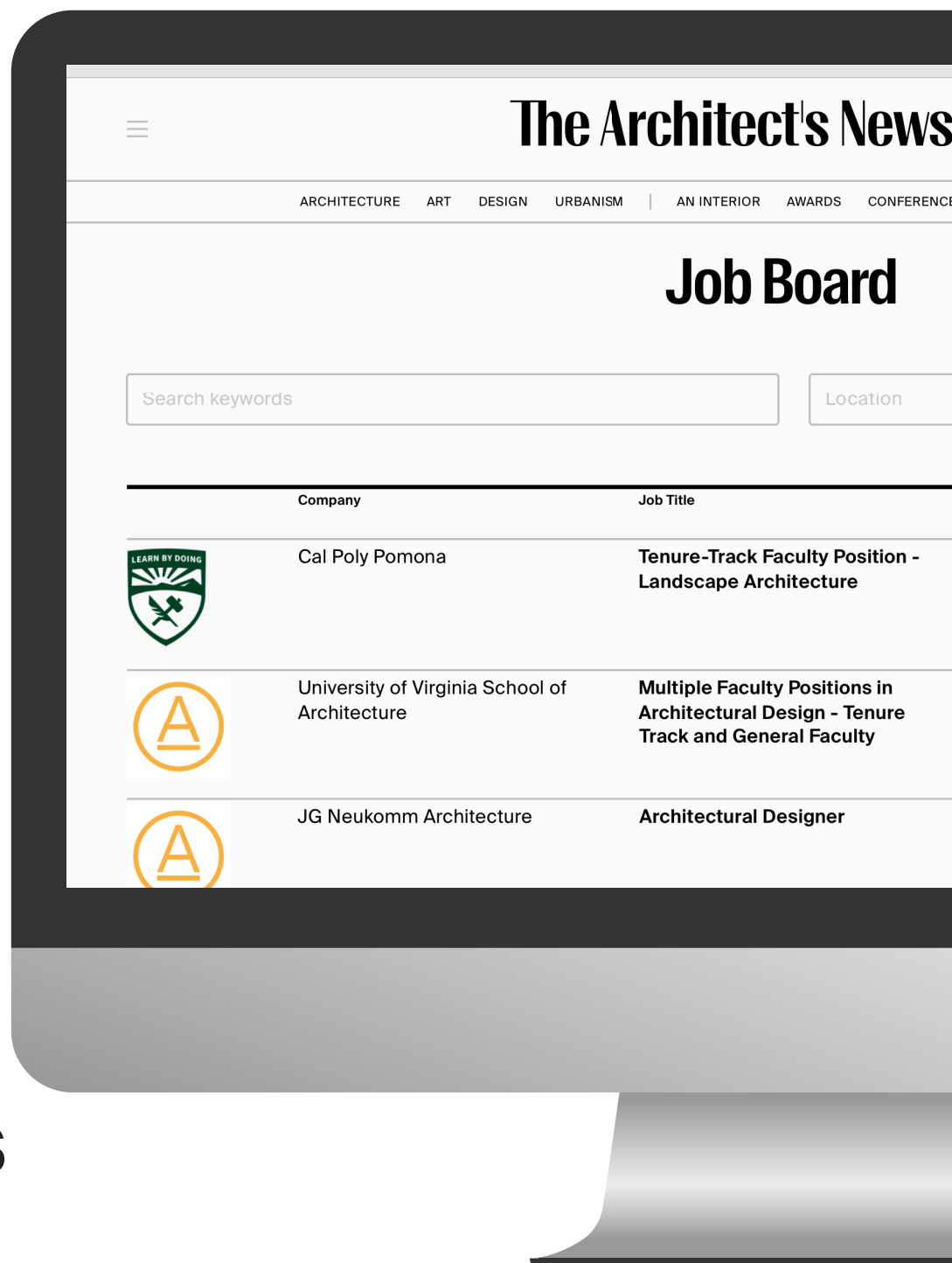
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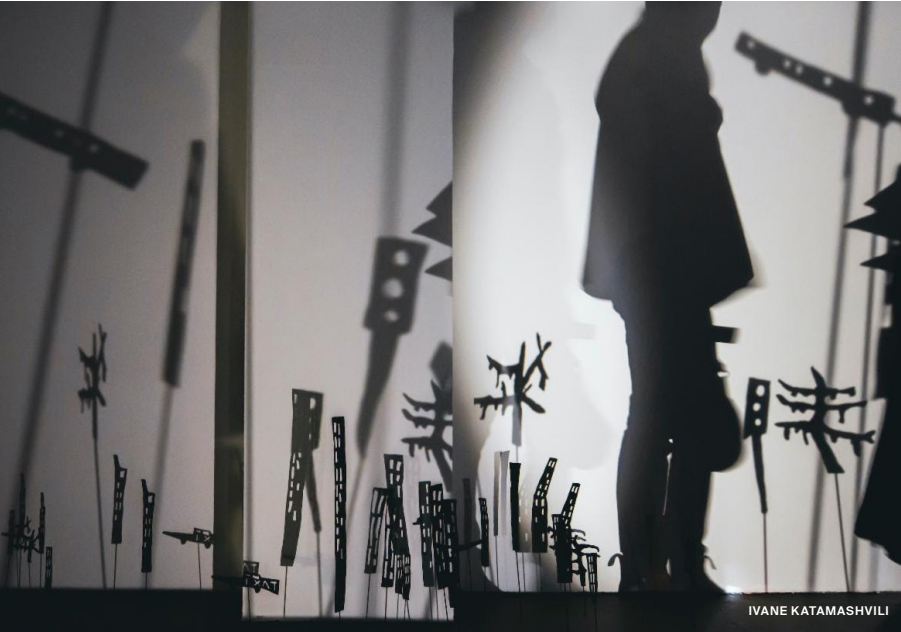
# 44 Highlights

East

## The Great Ruins of Saturn by Alvaro Urbano

Storefront for Art and Architecture  
97 Kenmare St, New York, NY

Open through February 26, 2022



The future doesn't age well. That holds doubly true for that futurephilic 20th-century typology—the World's Fair. The 1964 edition held in New York's Flushing Meadows Corona Park has had a long afterlife, at least in the set design department: fair icons like Wallace Harrison's New York Hall of Science and Philip Johnson's Tent of Tomorrow have cropped up in *Mad Men* and *The Avengers* to lend period-accurate vibes. These structures, both of them slight in terms of design quality, are the fair's most permanent holdover, though

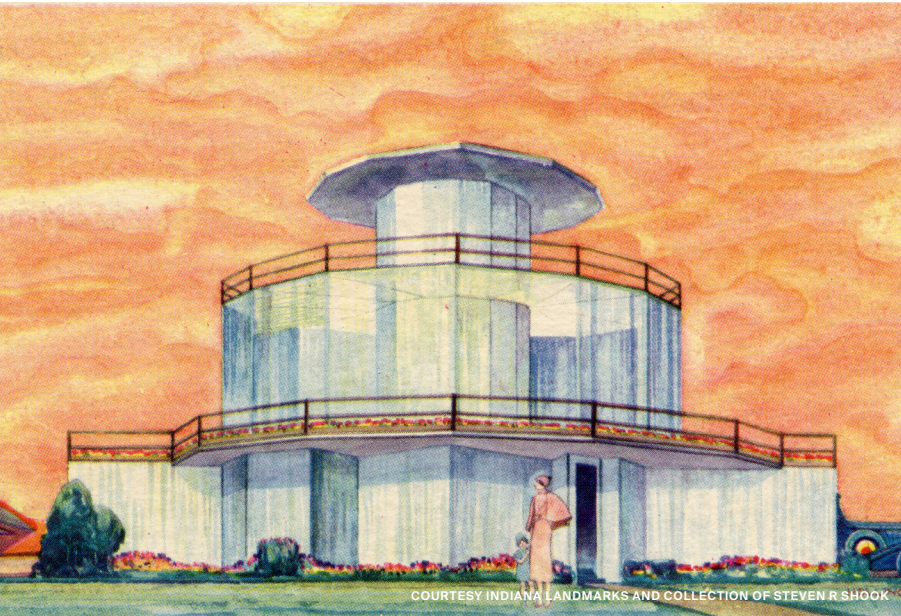
at least Harrison's has been continuously in use; Johnson's folly for some kind of cosmic circus has been continuously *out* of use. (It's been said demolition would be too costly.) *The Great Ruins*, a film by artist Alvaro Urbano, takes the Tent of Tomorrow (official name: the New York State Pavilion) and runs with it. This cautionary tale about capitalist progress and humanity's hubris returns us to Plato's cave (there are shadow puppets) even as it reaches for the stars. **Samuel Medina**

Midwest

## Houses of Tomorrow: Solar Homes from Keck to Today

Elmhurst Art Museum  
150 S Cottage Hill Ave, Elmhurst, IL 60126

Open through May 29, 2022



The Elmhurst Art Museum turns 25 this year and has planned a slate of exhibitions and events to coincide with the anniversary. The first of these is Houses of Tomorrow, which explores the earliest example of a glass house found stateside. The House of Tomorrow was designed and built by George Fred Keck of local firm Keck & Keck for a different World's Fair, 1933's Century of Progress. Keck's renderings depicted a faceted crystalline structure, almost more chandelier than archi-

tecture. As built, the prototypical dwelling made for a far less ethereal experience, but its modern conveniences—General Electric's inaugural dishwasher device among them—won over crowds. As Elmhurst curators are keen to point out, Keck's folly (which is extant and awaiting restoration) anticipated the ferro-vitreous residences designed by Mies van der Rohe, like the McCormick House, which the master designed in 1952 and which currently sits on the museum's campus. **SM**

East

## The Architects Collaborative 1945-1995

Pinkcomma Gallery  
46 Waltham St, Boston, MA 02118

Open through March 1, 2022



The brutalist craze of the 2010s shocked everyone, and American concrete converts have partly to thank Chris Grimley, Michael Kubo, and Mark Pasnik for the style's cultural reappreciation. The trio accomplished this feat with a skillful rebrand: in 2015, they published the book *Heroic: Concrete Architecture and the New Boston* to commemorate the city's concrete buildings, many of them public. With the wind in their sails, Grimley, Kubo, and Pasnik next founded Pinkcomma in the Shawmut neighborhood, a sliver of a gallery dedicated to exhibiting works of architecture. Its latest show, about the profession-

al collective Walter Gropius founded in 1945, dispenses with the heroic label altogether. The Architects Collaborative, or TAC, as the firm was often referred to, certainly exhibited a facility for the brutalist idiom, but more importantly for the curators, it established a model of practice well ahead of its time. The displays describe TAC's staffing structure and other materials to reveal certain progressive indicators. Case in point: among the eight founding principals, two were women—unheard of at the time. **SM**

West

## Florian Hecker – Resynthesizers

MAK Center for Art and Architecture  
8078 Woodrow Wilson Dr,  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Open through March 13, 2022



In other anniversary-related news, the Schindler House in Los Angeles will celebrate its centennial this coming summer. The low-slung modernist house—the first to have appeared in the city—serves as the headquarters of the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, which holds exhibitions and events on the property, as it does at another Schindler-designed address, the 1936 Fitzpatrick-Leland House. Compared with the West Hollywood bungalow, the Laurel Canyon residence is light and airy, emphasizing the

vertical as it navigates its sloped site. The architecture diligently accords with the “plastic” conception of space held by Schindler and other self-described modernists, making the home an interesting receptacle for the three aural pieces that make up *Resynthesizers*. Sounds emanate from speakers stacked totemlike, while artisanally crafted fragrances add further stimulus. The now-vintage abstraction that characterizes the house and its period furniture softens those algorithmically generated, 21st-century whirs and sprays. **SM**



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# 2022 EVENTS

**Atlanta**

February 25

**Toronto**

July 21

**Philadelphia**

March 8

**Dallas**

September 9

**San Francisco**

March 23

**Denver**

September 21

**New York City**

April 13+14

**Chicago**

October 7

**Austin**

April 27

**Los Angeles**

November 3+4

**Boston**

June 7

**Seattle**

December 2



# Planet City

By Liam Young | Uro Publications | \$49

## The Planet after Geoengineering

By Design Earth | Actar | \$22

The mid-20th-century writer and philosopher Marshall McLuhan first used the phrase “The medium is the message” in his 1964 book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. For McLuhan, the content of a television series or a picture book was less impactful than the way the message itself was delivered. In that same book he distinguished between “hot” media, which overwhelms our critical resistance and washes over us with direct intensity, and “cool” media, the kind that retreats into a detached and hazy distance, beckoning us to participate in completing the picture.

When it comes to messages about climate crises, the form and content are usually both hot. “They use 40 percent of the world’s energy, emit 50 percent of its greenhouse gases,” Brad Pitt tells an audience of architects in the opener for the green design documentary series *e<sup>2</sup> design*, produced by Autodesk and PBS in 2006, “they are the buildings where we work, live, and grow.” The repetition of these statistics and the subsequent imperatives to reduce carbon footprints can have a numbing effect; too much of this heat (climate doom and gloom) often leaves designers feeling powerless and burned out.

Two recent essays in speculative design research are trying to cool things down in a new way. *Planet City* was put together by Los Angeles- and London-based architect Liam Young, and *The Planet after Geoengineering*, by Design Earth, a collaborative practice led by Rania Ghosn and El Hadi Jazairi, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Ann Arbor, Michigan, respectively. Both projects—each pairing a book and film—use experiments with genre and media to lead us into stories about, as their titles suggest, possible Earths. Instead of a hot insistence about an inevitable future that overwhelms choice and critique in both medium and message, these coolheaded designers choose to ask questions about fears and desires.

*The Planet after Geoengineering* unfolds like a children’s book, with clear, yet abstract graphics and direct narrative text. But this is no simple bedtime story. The fables told here, in short, clipped sentences and richly textured bold, (mostly) grayscale images, are as morally ambiguous and deeply unsettling as classic old-school fairytales. Since accidental intervention into Earth’s climate has destabilized things, what might a more intentional attitude toward designing the world look like? Seemingly simple questions like this open to reveal more complicated ones inside: Is carbon sequestration another opportunity for petroleum companies to profit off disaster? Could weather-control initiatives threaten water supplies for millions of people? And if humans eventually build a climate-safe redoubt in a protected greenhouse, what happens to those left outside? It’s all grim (as in the Brothers Grimm). There are no easy answers here.

The book, and its animated companion (available as a short film on Design



Earth’s website), are similarly layered. The simple forms and bold cutouts draw us in, and once entranced, audiences familiar with speculative architecture will recognize swarms of sly references to design history floating in the clouds. As a coda, supplemental essays by Kathryn Yusoff, Benjamin Bratton, and Holly Jean Buck raise further questions, as these writers expand on the book’s premise.

If Design Earth sits us down for an uncanny children’s storytime, Liam Young’s *Planet City* tempts us with something like a grownup’s weekend Netflix binge. Here, the touchstones are science fiction, fantasy, and magical realism. Young engages in speculative foresight, and he’s invited us to explore his new planet. The project is set in an unspecified future era in which all of humanity has decided to restore Earth to a state of natural balance by relocating into a vast solitary city of 10 billion. In the book, the consequences of that provocative premise are lushly rendered in a series of cropped vignettes produced by Young and his collaborators. These show a somehow serene agglomeration of dozens of kinds of technology, architecture, and landscape, bathed in cool evening air and warm pink light.

*Planet City* is not presented in a site plan, or from an aerial view, and we get no sense of the whole place or the big picture; this is by design. World building happens via a series of moments—particular aspects and situations—and that method sets the template for the text as well. Like Design Earth, Young invites others to write about his planet, and a series of short and medium-length pieces draw out more specifics. In fictional narratives or in nonfiction speculation, the writers show how the law might work, how traditions would be passed down, how the restoration of the rest of the world might be taking place. There are facts and figures, right there on the book’s cover (2,357 algaefarms! 6,396,867 dentists!), but these are quickly dispensed with, leaving vivid human experiences—the family life, the gatherings, the rituals, and the outfits.

These last two take on a special role in



**Top:** *The Planet After Geoengineering* makes great use of its authors’ signature drawin style.

**Above:** *Planet City* contains no plans of its titular city, only eerie perspective drawings.

the film accompaniment of *Planet City*, suitably cool and abstract. There is no narrative here, just slow pans and frozen, pregnant moments, animated with potent original music by Forest Swords and cut with scenes of dancers in fantastic costumes produced under costume director Ane Crabtree. The short film is an ambient depiction of an eternal festival procession that winds continuously through the city. With so many cultures in one place, every day is a holiday or a holy day, and this is a party fit for the end, or the beginning, of the world.

Seen side by side, both Young’s and Design Earth’s fictive enterprises show us some of the best and worst possibilities for a future in which humans work to remake the planet. But these hopes and fears have never looked so cool. *Planet City* could be a teaser for a show that would sit among the best of the streaming prestige television spectacles, like *Game of Thrones* or *The Expanse*. Meanwhile, *The Planet after Geoengineering* could be the start of a whole new publishing category: the speculative dystopian children’s picture book.

These practitioners are no strangers to experiments with media and genre. Young

has worked extensively in film before, but has also made work as a drone choreographer, a book series editor, a teacher, and, with his studio Unknown Fields, as an explorer and tour guide at the edges of worlds. And Design Earth has used the mediums of sculpture, installation, and jewelry to dream and remake new planets and new spaces.

Other architects, designers, and planners who want to get their messages and warnings out to the world at large should take note of these mediums and methods. We don’t read the newspaper, McLuhan wrote, we step into it like a warm bath. Hot or cool, to reshape Earth, these multimedia projects about climate crisis suggest, designers will have to get out of their comfort zones. These two projects are worth immersing oneself in.

**Fred Scharmen teaches architecture and urban design at Morgan State University. He is the cofounder of the Working Group on Adaptive Systems, an art and design consultancy in Baltimore, Maryland. His book *Space Forces: A Critical History of Life in Outer Space* is out now from Verso.**



## *Fly on the Wall*

Trump's wall failed—or did it? A new exhibition is a testament to the conceptual resilience of “the wall.”



An installation from *The Wall/El Muro: What Is a Border Wall?*, on view at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., through November 6, 2022

What exactly was “the wall”? On August 4, 2014, a second-tier New York City real estate developer turned television game show host took to Twitter to voice the demand, as he put it then, to “SECURE THE BORDER! BUILD A WALL!” This was the first time that the future president would declare his support for the endeavor and by no means the last time he would do so without furnishing any real specifics as to what precisely he had in mind. In fact, throughout his tenure, he never really explained what “the wall” was.

In November, the National Building Museum (NBM) in Washington, D.C., unveiled an exhibition that attempts to fill in the gaps. Curated by Sarah A. Leavitt, *The Wall/El Muro* is a modestly scaled but engaging, informative exploration of the odd history and troubled present of the United States’ southern border. More specifically, the show is about the structures—ranging from memorial-type markers to chicken wire, to tall fences, to somewhat taller fences—that successive presidential administrations have erected in an attempt to demarcate that border and render it less permeable. Through illuminating photographs, wall text, video, and artifacts, Leavitt, who previously served on NBM’s full-time curatorial

staff, successfully walks a line as fine and as fraught as the conceptual abstraction that is the border itself. Two lines, really: On the one hand, how to render such a sprawling and complex subject in the space of a few white-walled rooms? On the other hand, how to do it in today’s polarized climate, without quickly alienating half the visitors?

The solution on offer at NBM is appropriately subtle. Especially through the use of real-life material collected at borderland sites, the show packs the small display space with the kinds of compelling, stare-worthy objects whose very aura speaks louder and more eloquently than any verbal polemic ever could: asylum application forms, an old section of chain link, the discarded belongings of migrants crossing the desert. The delicate yet creepy models of the 2017 wall “prototypes”—the ones that the previous presidential administration plonked down in the California desert, re-created here by Pratt Institute’s Ane Gonzalez Lara—as well as the gray gallery walls, perforated to resemble the barrier structures actually in place on the U.S.-Mexico border, all help produce an environment with exactly the right air of tension, confusion, and melancholy. About the only

thing missing (though it does seem a glaring omission) is one of the old surplus Vietnam-era helicopter landing mats that were the default fencing material in the San Diego sector from the 1990s until quite recently. Their battered surfaces, and the singular histories they represented, would have made a perfect complement to the show’s layered ambience.

It would seem only fair at this point to disclose that I wrote a book on a related topic a couple of years ago, an architectural history of border walls generally and of the wall in particular—the “build the wall” wall, the one that was supposed to be made of solar panels or possibly of unscalably smooth supermetal, was supposed to run the whole length of the border and was definitely, definitely not going to be a “fence,” one GOP also-ran once suggested. In this connection, *The Wall/El Muro* was something of a trip down a very bumpy memory lane, full of familiar scenes and faces; even the livery of the wall placards was exactly the same red, white, and black as my book’s cover, though I’m quite confident this was pure coincidence. Written and researched at the same time that said presidential administration was trying (and trying, and trying)

to remake the border, the book was really nothing more than a snapshot, a blurred image of something seen at too-close range and moving too fast. So what, with the perspective of at least a little time, does Leavitt now see?

The answer, worrisomely: still too much and still nothing good. The statistics, aerial photography, and documentary evidence on display in *The Wall/El Muro* suggest that the region and the topic remain as rife as ever with endemic problems, along with loads of misbegotten ideas—detaining children, for starters—to address them. If the NBM show is right, we can be all but certain that the border and its barriers will keep on providing political fodder for some of the worst tendencies in American political life. We’re no further out of the woods than we were a year ago, and we’re definitely not over the wall.

**Ian Volner has contributed articles on architecture and urbanism to *Harper’s*, *The New Yorker*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *New York Magazine*, among other publications. He is the author of numerous books and monographs, most recently *Jorge Pardo: Public Projects and Commissions* (Petzel, 2020).**



## Walk This Way

*Bodies in Urban Spaces* pokes fun at the built environment.

Willi Dorner is an artist and choreographer. Lisa Rastl is a photographer. They are married and live in Vienna, Austria. Since 2006, they have been engaged in a project called *Bodies in Urban Spaces*, site-specific performances for groups of dancers that lead audiences on meandering processions through the streets of various cities. Along these trails, the dancers, who wear brightly colored sweat suits, interact with features in the built environment. They use porticoes, awnings, balconies, thresholds, windows, railings, and light posts in ways that their shapes might suggest to the body, but for which these implements were certainly not intended. The performances have some kinship to parkour, but rather than indulging in hair-raising feats of derring-do, they assume an inquisitive and critical stance: The dancers wedge themselves in gaps, hang themselves from ledges, drape themselves across steps, plaster themselves to walls, and assume other interrogatory postures that appear both uncomfortable and humorous.

Humorous, that is, to some. Others are quite offended. As Dorner explained to *AN*, “We are sometimes approached by people who are quite upset by what we are doing, and they get aggressive with us.” Yet others take the opportunity to grab a selfie with the odd dance troupe, rightly recognizing an opportunity to hook in Instagram likes and followers. The municipalities themselves—*Bodies in Urban Spaces* has run in 110 cities so far—have also taken notice and responded with varying degrees of regulation. In the beginning, the performances were not announced. Timed with festivals, they’d merely pick up what following they could attract. Now, permissions must be obtained to avoid disciplinary actions. In the U.K., sheets must be handed out to audience members with instructions on how to move and behave. This authoritative control of what was originally a spontaneous happening is a bummer. It also proves the subversiveness of the performance and, hopefully, encourages us to think in new ways about freedom and public space. **Aaron Seward**



LISA RASTL



LISA RASTL

**Top:** *Bodies in Urban Spaces*, performed in Salzburg, Austria, in 2013

**Bottom:** *Bodies in Urban Spaces*, performed in Vilnius, Lithuania, in 2017



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual



With the Best of Practice Award, *A/N* tips its hat to North American firms excelling at every level of the AEC industry. And we mean every level—from architecture and landscape to interiors and lighting, from construction and fabrication to wayfinding and photography. Honoring firms of all sizes and regions, the award will offer a snapshot of what practice looks like today.

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A photograph of a modern building facade with a repeating geometric pattern of windows. The windows are set within a light-colored, angular concrete or stone structure. The windows themselves have dark frames and reflect the sky. A thin, curved yellow line is drawn across the lower right portion of the image, starting from the left edge and curving upwards towards the right.

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